

The invisible  
Democrat:  
Larry Agran

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## ARKANSAS' UNSOLVED MYSTERIES



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A small Arkansas airport allegedly served as hub  
for an international drug-smuggling operation.  
Did Gov. Bill Clinton look the other way?

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# Is new AIDS definition a mistake?

By Rod McCullom

The number of AIDS cases is expected to nearly double on April 1. But the increase will not be the result of a massive indulgence in unsafe sexual practices or needle-sharing. The spiral will be due to a change in the official definition of AIDS by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Under the former guidelines, which date from 1986, an HIV-infected person had to develop any of 23 serious, opportunistic diseases or infections peculiar to the virus, such as Kaposi's sarcoma, in order to be classified as having AIDS. The new case definition applies to any infected person with less than 200 CD4 lymphocyte cells, commonly known as T cells, per cubic millimeter of blood. These cells, which are essential to the body's immune system, are the primary target of the human immunodeficiency virus. A healthy person usually has at least 1,000 of the helper cells per cubic millimeter of blood.

The new accounting rule is expected to add at least 160,000 AIDS cases to an official count that already numbers more than 195,000, according to the CDC. It estimates that a million more Americans may be infected with the virus. So far, approximately 56,000 people have died from AIDS complications.

For years, groups such as the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power and many health professionals maintained the CDC's AIDS-case definition was too restrictive, claiming it overlooked many women and IV drug users, who represent a growing percentage of the reported AIDS cases. HIV-positive women and drug users often manifest different symptoms

from the "official" 23 infections recognized by the old CDC case definition. These persons, who are disproportionately lower-income or minorities, have not been tracked by local health authorities and therefore have not qualified for disability benefits to offset the high cost of treatment.

Cities, too, have been affected: In New York in 1990, almost a third of those hospitalized with HIV-related conditions did not meet the federal case definition. One result was that the city was not able to qualify for millions of dollars in federal funding.

It appears that the new T-cell cut-off is a compromise definition struck between the CDC and AIDS activists. "Our classification system was somewhat narrow before. It's more inclusive now," says Kent Taylor, a publicist at the CDC. "We think that it will help more of the HIV-infected population."

**Lingering questions:** But many AIDS activists and health professionals claim that the new guidelines are a step backward that only guarantees more confusion and more under-counting. They charge that:

- The CDC has not demonstrated that the expanded case definition will maximize surveillance;
- The new definition raises new privacy and confidentiality concerns;
- Pharmaceutical companies that manufacture AIDS-related drugs may be tempted to take shortcuts in research and testing;
- It may be even harder for persons with AIDS (PWAs) to receive federal disability benefits as governments around the country slash their AIDS service budgets.

First, consider surveillance. T-cell testing is problematic. Carisa Cunningham of the Washington, D.C.-based AIDS Action Council explains, "There are several methods that may be used to count the CD4 cells." According to many published reports, individual results can vary by 10 percent or 20 percent a day. Moreover, it's not uncommon for results to vary from lab to lab.

"When is a T-cell count really below 200?" wrote Jeffrey Levi, the Council's lobbyist, in a letter to James Curran, director of the CDC's HIV/AIDS Division. Levi wondered whether one meets the case definition through one count or several. And if the count climbs past 200, what happens then?

Access to testing is another surveillance concern. "Already many [who are] HIV-positive do not monitor their T-cell counts. Some studies suggest the overwhelming majority do not," says Michael Eller, who tracks AIDS in minority communities for the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic in Chicago. "Few HIV-positive men who walk in here have regularly checked their counts."

The new rules may exacerbate the problem. In New York state alone, according to a recent *Village Voice* article, half of the persons who die from AIDS never had their T cells monitored. Thus, under the new case definition, thousands and thousands of more people will be classified by the CDC as having AIDS, but no plans have been made to inform them of their diagnosis.

The new case definition also raises confidentiality issues. With the exception of New York state, privacy laws

that limit access to HIV test results do not address T-cell counts. However, some observers, such as Lisa Bowleg, research associate at the AIDS Policy Center in Washington, believe that T-cell results may fall under the purview of HIV privacy laws. This legal limbo concerns many health-policy experts who worry that people's T-cell counts will be used against them.

In addition, the CDC has not yet coordinated its new case definition with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which oversees research and development of new AIDS therapies. On the East Coast and in California, there have been reports that some insurance companies are using T-cell test results to bar coverage to applicants.

According to AIDS Action Council's Levi, unless a system of anonymous T-cell counting is developed, future anonymous HIV testing is "theoretical, at best."

**Fiscal fallout:** The CDC's new AIDS definition raises clinical research issues as well. Under current FDA guidelines, companies wishing to test and market drugs first conduct their own tests and then submit their data to the FDA, pending approval. Obviously, the new case definition will require new testing standards, but the FDA has yet to develop any new guidelines.

## INSIDE STORY

The new case definition may also prompt major changes in federal AIDS funding formulas. For example, the Ryan White Act of 1991, which funds direct-service projects, allocates grants to cities based on their reported AIDS caseloads as of March 31. Since this deadline falls one day before the new case definition takes effect, it's likely that several cities that are already grossly underfunded will have even less money next fiscal year, when the national caseload is expected to grow by nearly 80 percent. This situation will likely force cities and non-profits to compete even more fiercely for block grants such as HRSA Title I funding or HUD's AIDS Housing Opportunities Act program.

"The government is trying to create a situation in which people with AIDS fight among each other," charges Peter Uittenbosch, a spokesperson for the National Association of People With AIDS, a lobbying group.

Just a month before the CDC announced that it was broadening its definition of AIDS, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that it was revising its rules on disability benefits for PWAs. Until this year, the SSA, like the separately administered Medicaid program for low-income Americans, applied a guideline known as "presumptive disability" when reviewing disability claims of PWAs. This meant that anyone who had been diagnosed as having AIDS was entitled to receive disability benefits. Such benefits are often crucial to PWAs because of the high cost of medications, which frequently cost more than \$20,000 a year. Under the new SSA regulations, an HIV-positive person must prove that he or she is unable to "perform any substantial gainful activity" to qualify for aid.

This new definition may benefit many of the HIV-positive people who did not qualify for benefits under the former, stricter CDC case definition. But some policy experts believe that the regulations may ultimately exclude more PWAs than they benefit.

Theresa McGovern, a New York attorney who often represents PWAs filing disability claims, calls the new guidelines "overly stringent." She says that they require medical evidence of severe illness or "extreme functional restriction," and even HIV-positive children must prove that they are severely disabled.

"I think it's safe to say that the CDC's revised case definition leaves many questions unanswered," says Carisa Cunningham of the AIDS Action Council. "There still needs to be more discussion among policymakers and AIDS advocates before they move ahead."

Rod McCullom is a Chicago-based journalist.

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By David Moberg

**C**OULD WE BE WITNESSING THE START OF A disarmament race, a downward spiral in global military spending yielding new investments in peace and prosperity?

The presumed Soviet threat has virtually vanished. Now Russian President Boris Yeltsin and even President George Bush are making unilateral arms cuts as incentives for further reductions from the other side. The Cold War edge to conflicts in the less-developed world has dulled, and old antagonists from El Salvador to Korea and the Middle East are resolving deep-seated military disputes or at least talking to each other. The U.N. offers new hope as a forum and a force for peace. Enough has changed in just the past year that President Bush has proposed lowering real military spending through 1997 about 15 percent below what he projected last year. That shaves \$50 billion, or about 3 percent, from the \$1.76 trillion Bush had wanted to spend on the military in fiscal years 1992 to 1997.

Bush recommended limitation or cancellation of such major weapons systems as the B-2 Stealth bomber, the Sea Wolf submarine, the advanced cruise missile and new generations of tanks and helicopters.

Yet he wanted more money for Star Wars as well as continued expansion of the aircraft carrier fleet and full-scale production of both a new fighter (the F-22) and a new cargo plane (the C-17), designed to airlift troops quickly to remote locations.

"This deep," Bush said, referring to the military cuts in his State of the Union address, drawing a line in budgetary sand, "and no deeper."

How far beyond Bush could the United States go in reducing the military budget? What obstacles—besides Bush—stand in the way of much deeper cuts?

**How low can you go?** After a 60 percent buildup in the military during the first five Reagan years, real defense spending began to decline in 1985, although it's still well above the 1980 level. References to defense cuts can get confusing: Amounts "cut" depend on what baseline is used for comparison and whether expenditures are expressed in inflation-adjusted dollars. For example, in what are called current-year dollars, Bush projects spending to stay close to \$290 billion a year for the next five years, but assuming modest inflation, that yields a 4 percent annual reduction below current spending. Also, about 60 percent of his cuts result from terminating anticipated production of the B-2 bombers and Sea Wolf submarines—moves that do not reduce the present size of the military one iota.

Many mainstream experts now propose that the defense budget could be cut in half in real terms (about \$150 billion 1992 dollars). Democratic presidential candidates Jerry Brown and Larry Agran and former CIA Director William Colby call for cutting the military budget by half in five years; Brookings Institution defense expert William Kaufmann and Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin propose a 50 percent cut in ten years. Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey suggests a 30 to 40 percent cut in ten years; Gov. Bill Clinton and former Sen. Paul Tsongas favor a cut by one-third in five years.

Senate Democratic leaders have converged around somewhat more modest fig-

ures. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell talks of a \$100 billion savings over five years, about double that proposed by Bush. (Democratic Senators Lloyd Bentsen of Texas and Bill Bradley of New Jersey had suggested even smaller cuts, respectively, of \$73 to \$80 billion over five years.) Yet even very conservative Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona last November proposed cuts of \$113 billion over five years, about the same as proposed by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA).

Cutting by half in five years has emerged as the outer limit in mainstream debate partly because it's a nice round number, partly because it appears feasible and still leaves a powerful U. S. military, and partly because about half of all military expenditures are attributable to defense of western Europe against the ex-Soviets, no longer a compelling rationale.

Yet there are many obstacles to moving that far or that fast. A big peace dividend soon, therefore, is no certainty. Difficult disputes also loom over what to do with whatever dividend materializes, an issue almost as important as cutting defense itself.

**Military-industrial complexities:** First, there are a host of technical problems. Under pressure from Bush, Congress will speed up this year's budget process. That will make it difficult for liberals to increase the first year savings significantly beyond Bush's proposed \$8 billion reduction from last year's request. (Rep. Ron Dellums [D-CA] will nevertheless recommend first year cuts of \$50 billion, and other liberals will aim for \$30 billion.)

Deconstructing the national security state is not the same as demobilizing after a major war. Rapid cuts in career military personnel, especially if there is not a meaningful program of career readjustment, might demoralize the military and impose personal hardships. It will take more time to reduce military overhead—command and control operations, research work and various troop support activities—than to reduce the numbers of weapons or troops.

Although budgets for weapons systems are authorized in one year, the money is spent over many years. If the \$60 billion authorized for procurement of weapons in this fiscal year's budget had been canceled, there would have only been a savings of about \$7 billion in outlays of money, according to Steven

Kosiak, a budget analyst with the Defense Budget Project, a Washington research group.

Then there is the question of maintaining an industrial base for the military. Even if the U.S. does not need tanks, submarines or other weapons now, the congressional-military-industrial triad of defense lobbyists will argue that we must keep a slow trickle in the pipeline to maintain the skills and capacity to make weapons if they're needed in the future.

The technical questions also quickly turn political. This is an election year. And as much as members of Congress may favor cutting defense, they—Democrats and Republicans alike—won't be anxious to cut the contract or base in their home state or district. When Colorado Gov. Roy Romer last week criticized Bush's budget and limited defense cuts, the president nastily played the jobs card. "What bases do you want to close?" Bush countered. "What areas do you want to shut down?...Or do you want to lay off the people?"

Most analysts agree that there will be anywhere from slight to significant economic advantages from military cuts depending on what is then done with the money. Whatever the long-term advantage, the short-term effects are politically unpalatable. According to figures calculated by Northwestern University economist Robert Eisner, cuts in defense equivalent to one percent of the gross national product would result in a rise of about .4 to .6 of a percent in unemployment rates. In 1987, defense took 6.4 percent of the GNP; under Bush's proposal it would drop to 3.4 percent in 1997.

The political impact of the layoffs could be intense in dozens of states and congressional districts. Democrats who might like to cut military spending fear not only defense layoffs in their home bases but also traditional Republican attacks on them as "soft on defense." Although Democratic leaders feel that global shifts in the past year have helped neutralize that traditional image, "they want to be only slightly ahead of Bush," a congressional aide said. "They want to win the [presidential] election on the economy and don't want to give any excuses, that is, national security issues, to be used against the Democrats."

**National insecurity:** Although public opinion has long been sympathetic to mili-

tary cuts, there are indications that people are skittish about making deep cuts. In a December poll taken by the Greenberg-Lake firm for the liberal Campaign for New Priorities, three-fourths of respondents supported a 10 percent cut, but respondents were evenly split over a 25 percent cut, even when they were told this was Bush's proposal. Three-fourths of respondents opposed a 50 percent cut in the military.

Americans clearly feel insecure and cling to an outmoded defense establishment. Perhaps it's just a bad habit or a misplaced yearning for lost power; perhaps it's a fear of the unknown. In a survey last summer for Americans Talk Issues, a non-profit public opinion research group, the Soviet Union was seen as a minor threat. By a margin of 60 percent to 38 percent, those polled favored eliminating all nuclear arms instead of maintaining a precarious balance of retaliatory power among several nations.

But still these Americans retained a very complex sense of national insecurity. While drug trafficking ranked tops as a threat (cited by 84 percent), three other threats tied for second place (cited by 74 percent)—nuclear weapons in the hands of Third World dictators and terrorists, pollution and violent crime. The high cost of health care came in a close fifth. (In other polls, Japan's economic power or U.S. economic decline have ranked high as threats.)

It could easily be argued that military spending would do nothing to help and much to exacerbate most—if not all—of these perceived insecurities. Terrorism and drug trafficking are today no worse, perhaps even somewhat less of a problem, than a few years ago. Deployment of the revamped Star Wars—which employs land-based anti-ballistic missiles with space detectors—would not protect New York from a terrorist or small nation with a nuclear bomb in a suitcase or on a small boat in the harbor.

Instead of relying on military retaliation, tighter control over sales of nuclear arms, "dual use technologies" (civilian equipment that can be used for high-tech military ends) and conventional weapons should be the primary weapon against proliferation of the machines of war. Yet even in fiscal year 1991, the United States sold \$63 billion worth of defense goods and services to other countries, with 37 percent of that total going to the volatile, over-armed Middle East.

Much instability and conflict elsewhere in the world (including the attempted military coup last week in Venezuela) is either caused or worsened by global economic relations, such as burdensome Third World debt, Draconian austerity plans imposed by the International Monetary Fund, or highly unstable commodity prices.

**Flawed rethinking:** The Bush administration and the Pentagon have given no coherent rationale for their continued levels of defense spending. To his credit, Rep. Les Aspin (D-WI), the Democratic chair of the Armed Services Committee, has insisted that military spending should be linked to a rethinking of the U.S. role in the world. Sadly, he has not rethought very much or very well.

The new threats to security, Aspin has argued, are primarily aggression, terrorism or the acquisition of nuclear weapons by "rogue" regional powers (Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Korea, China and Cuba). Aspin also

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By Joel Bleifuss

**The investigation goes on**

On February 5, the House of Representatives voted to investigate charges that the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign made a deal with representatives of the Ayatollah Khomeini to delay the release of the American hostages held in Iran until after the presidential election in exchange for the shipment of arms to Iran. The 217-192 vote granted unlimited funds and an unlimited time frame for the investigation.

The House vote follows on the heels of a call late last month by 15 former American hostages in Teheran for a congressional investigation into the allegations. Their appeal took the form of an open letter to House Majority Leader Thomas Foley (D-WA), House Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-IL), Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-ME) and Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS).

The 15 wrote: "As the last American hostages return from the Middle East questions regrettably still linger concerning allegations of foul play in the 1980 presidential election. These questions can only be settled finally by the U.S. Congress. We therefore support the efforts of Congress to conduct a 'thorough and fair inquiry' into allegations that our release may have been delayed by political partisans.

"Threats of filibuster," they continued, "attempts to vilify those who have done preliminary research, and reluctance to grant funds and power to the committees conducting these investigations appear as transparent attempts to turn from the necessary task of finding the truth, whatever that may be. It is unacceptable to delay the investigation any longer because of political squabbling or premature judgments about the veracity of the allegations.

"Although we sincerely hope the allegations can be proved false, the decision to move ahead can not be based on what we anticipate the outcome to be. We urge you—the leaders of Congress—to move this investigation forward and insure that dignity, rather than fear, will guide this process to a just conclusion."

Leading off the list of those signing the former hostages' letter is Bruce Laingen, the former charge d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Iran who as late as last year had refused to sign a June 13 appeal by eight of the former hostages for "an unbiased, bipartisan congressional investigation with full subpoena power."

"[Now] I'm quite prepared to have an examination. I think it should be looked at," Laingen told *In These Times*. "I just remain skeptical that it could have happened. I am not prepared to believe that Casey is so stupid as to arrange such a deal and believe he could have kept it secret."

The letter signers probably have been following the ins and outs of the October Surprise allegations closer than anyone else. And, as their letter indicates, they have discerned attempts in the media "to vilify those who have done preliminary research."

**Voodoo journalism:** One example of that vilification can be found in the writings of Stephen Emerson. Last November he examined the October Surprise allegations for *The New Republic* and wrote, "By any measure of honest reporting, the October Surprise theory should have died long ago." Emerson posited that what should have been dead is kept alive by an "October Surprise cult" that is "fueled by entrepreneurial journalists" who are stirring up trouble from their "lucrative cottage industry."

Emerson's voodoo journalism captured the fancy of COMINT, a quarterly publication that is dedicated to promoting "balance in government-funded media" and that is edited by that infamous pair of neo-con intellectual retreads, David Horowitz and Peter Collier. Writing in the winter 1992 issue, scholar Peter Schweizer condemned the Public Broadcasting Service's *Frontline* documentary news program for spending \$225,000 on an April 17, 1991, documentary "whose title captured the partisan agenda of the conspiracy theorists: Election Held Hostage." Schweizer wrote, "Thus is the prestige of public television used to legitimize shabby, partisan journalism and to influence the political process."

The central thesis of Schweizer's attack on *Frontline* is based on the erroneous idea that "much of the information that went into the *Frontline* program originated with Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), the House Democrats' chief proponent of the October Surprise Theory." Schweizer claims he knows this because he was told so by an unnamed "senior staff member in the office of Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL)."

**South African connection:** If pointing the finger at Conyers doesn't succeed, Hyde's senior staff member might consider blaming South Africa.

In the past two weeks, new allegations have surfaced concern-

**Larry Evans: History's rustproofer**

By Bill Stamets

Global restructuring of the post-Cold War economy has placed entire industries at risk. Trade unions face historically unique challenges in internationally ratcheted markets. Is there an opening for a new style of union organizing?

Larry Evans, a postmodern, grass-roots, cross-cultural organizer, operates on a novel plane. His workplace is history. He is a steward of memories. Using video, he mines the past of industrial workers, hoping to forge a new spirit of unity from this scarce resource. He started with an inter-mill newsletter for Pittsburgh steelworkers in the '70s. Now, in the '90s, he is engaged in a sister-city video dialogue with Ukrainian coal miners.

And for his life's opus, Larry Evans is collecting the stories of workers who made their livings in industries that are now dying. Far from an academic pursuit, Evans hopes his tactic of preserving history may ultimately save jobs, too, if enough workers can hear their common voices.

"My ambition is to get workers to be able to speak their piece—tell their history—so everybody can see each other's story and can understand that we're all in the same boat," Evans says. "The only way we can stop this race to the bottom we're economically thrown into—a race where one nation's workers are pitted against another nation's—is if those workers communicate with each other and know what the hell's going on."

Evans came to Chicago recently to screen and discuss *Perestroika from Below*, a documentary he helped produce on striking Soviet miners. He related his experiences in the Ukraine in the summer of 1989 to the campaign season at home. "We get

easily rallied into this pro-America, America-first campaign out of desperation, not out of insight," he says. "The people who are going to benefit the most from protectionism are the wheelers and dealers at the top management level. It's not going down to the average guy on the shop floor. The only way he can protect his interests is to win the communications revolution."

Communicating the history of unionism between generations and among nations can have radical impact, Evans believes. Swapping stories about bosses and benefits is more than recreational; it's a crucial way for workers to counter divisive perceptions. Noting how American workers are turned against their Mexican counterparts, Evans fears their Eastern European counterparts are slated for the next wave of resentment. "We have to know each other. We have to communicate with other workers. Either that or we'll just continue this slide into the inevitability of trade wars turning into real wars," he warns.

**Early lessons:** Evans' first brush with radicalism came from his aunt, who worked for a tug-boat company and chaired the local Alger Hiss Defense Committee.

Early in his Baltimore upbringing, a tone of infamy was injected. His father, a former steelworker, had tried to shift gears by moving to the country to try to make a living. But when his father refused to pay the Baltimore County executive, Spiro Agnew, a bribe for an access road, his modest venture as a home builder was doomed. In the Evans household, Agnew's name was a synonym for poison.

As a youth, Evans enjoyed going against the grain. When he got punitive assignments in high



school detention periods, like answering the essay question, "How high does the meatball bounce?" Evans says he really got into it. "When everybody else would be picking their nose, I came to be known as a flaky writer."

In college he covered sports for the campus paper. He once defied his wrestling coach's command to take advantage of an opponent's neck injury. Instead of pinning the bandaged wrestler, Evans beat the still formidable "Hammer Head" on points alone.

The next day, in an English class, Evans wrote a "stream-of-consciousness" story about obeying his coach and putting "Hammer Head" in a "figure-four-headscissors hold"—killing him on the spot. His teacher liked the macabre fictionalization enough to submit it to a national Jesuit magazine. His coach was livid.

Evans' ROTC career was also ill-starred. "I went to a military ball with a sergeant's stripe on one shoulder, a corporal's stripe on the other and a third-grade arithmetic medal on my chest," he recalls. "They made me stand at attention outside for the whole time." On grounds of spunk alone—he thinks—he got a chance to join the Green Berets. He declined. "It was not based on any politics," he says, "just rebelliousness on my part."

**Full vista:** After college, Evans joined VISTA in 1969. He credits that decision to a bumper sticker of the era that he spotted on the back of a taxi: "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." Evans believes his two-year sojourn turned him from a "one-dimensional being" who was a Baltimore jock into a "one-and-a-half-dimensional being" who worked in a Florida migrant-workers camp.

But Evans exceeded the curricular boundaries at Camp Learn-a-Lot when he took a truckload of black, Chicano and Seminole kids to a private beach at Boca Raton. VISTA kicked him out, but he had enjoyed meeting Malcolm X-reading radicals.

Moving to Pittsburgh, after a run from the Selective Service, Evans took and flunked his physical at Bethlehem Steel. But U.S. Steel hired him, and Evans soon joined Ed Sadlowski's insurgent movement inside the steelworkers' union. Evans' specialty: facilitating "an inter-mill conversation."

In 1979, he helped start up the *Mill Hunk Herald*, a worker writer magazine where he held the title "editor of sorts." The *Mill Hunk's* editorial process was decidedly democratic. "Every subscriber was welcome to come to editorial meetings and vote on manuscripts over an ample supply of beer and wine," says Evans. "Despite being a pain in the ass, it was our magic, our one claim to legitimacy. Nobody else in the labor movement, much less the known universe, operated that way."

Evans boasts, "Because the *Mill Hunk* was so outrageously bold and open, it became more than a magazine. It became a cultural movement—creating a community." The *Mill Hunk's* two softball teams even voted on their starting lineups. In an introduction to *Overtime*, an anthology of *Mill Hunk* articles and poems, Evans writes, "We provided refuge and expression for dissidents undemocratically flushed out of the labor movement."

In the early '80s, Evans teamed up with Tony Buba, rust-belt documenter extraordinaire, to raise funds for a film to counteract mainstream coverage of the steel industry crisis. Laid off from U.S. Steel in 1982, Evans had more than enough time to work on his film project. Only the money was missing. His wife, a high school teacher, urged him to forgo his "radical" agenda and pursue a "safe" project in the meantime. The resulting video, *Steel Valley Stories*, is an oral history portrait of rust-belt retirees.

Evans was amazed at the richness, not to mention radical potential, of the tales they gathered. One elderly fellow testifies to the "animal instinct" that organizers developed for detecting ambushes

by railroad dicks. This survivor claims, "The only way Pennsylvania Railroad cops could get a promotion was to kill somebody. Nine out of 10 of them reaching the rank of captain or lieutenant had done it."

The series of 36 video portraits appeared on Pittsburgh's public access channel, where the project caught the attention of a visiting delegation of Soviets from the Ukrainian city of Donetsk—one of about a dozen old steel towns tied to Pittsburgh by sister-city relationships. Evans soon received an invitation from the Donetsk city council to record workers' memories there.

**The Ukraine:** Evans' expedition to the Donbass region of the Ukraine consisted of 14 Americans from seven different universities and included four cameras and four historians. They had planned to gather first-person recollections from retired workers, but instead brought back first-hand recordings of an unfolding labor revolt. Just before arriving in July 1989, some 4,000 miners went on strike at the Gorky Mine in Donetsk. History was being made, not just remembered.

Besides playing a lot of soccer (the Ukrainian men had never played against women before the Americans came along), Evans says the Americans "tried to drink them under the table" and couldn't. The also exchanged stories and radical political theories about how the world was changing and "where the industrial worker is going to fall out in the shakeout."

Besides collecting oral histories from older miners, Evans filmed meetings on the immediate crisis. The film narrator states, "The union refused to negotiate with management. It claimed to be management." An angry worker taunts an aloof leader, "Where was your conscience when you bought an imported refrigerator?" Another scolds the beleaguered bigwig, "You should apologize and say, 'Comrades—I'm incompetent,' and get up and leave." The workers' assembly then votes to strip him of his medal as "Honored Miner of the Ukraine," which will penalize his pension. One worker proclaims, "The time of 'I' is coming to an end. The time of 'we' is coming."

**Future prospects:** *Perestroika from Below* was broadcast on a dozen PBS stations and played at a few European film festivals. As an encore, Evans and his historian colleagues are raising funds to shoot a follow-up. "We desperately need to get back to Donetsk and help let their voices be heard," he said. But, for the moment, Evans has lost contact with his Donetsk comrades—a term that is out of favor only two years later. The independence struggle has eclipsed local union concerns. "Right now, it's kind of nightmarish for both sides of the ocean. I'm afraid they're getting bulldozed under with all the restructuring, and we're just not hearing the workers' voices coming out of the Soviet Union at all. It doesn't look good for worldwide trade unions."

On the home front, this 44-year-old former steelworker is now a consultant for the Steel Industry Heritage Task Force, a group that is concocting post-rust schemes for the region's ravaged economy.

He is sensitive to parallels to Auto World, the failed theme park in Flint, Mich., that Michael Moore documented in *Roger & Me*. General Motors attempted to capitalize on Motor City memorabilia, including its own outdated assembly lines, by building a museum for tourists where cheery robots had taken the place of laid off workers.

Yet, trying to salvage the educational and entertainment potential of landmark dinosaurs that dot the landscape, Evans works alongside industrial archaeologists and tourism developers. Can recreation revitalize the mill towns? How many software boutiques per abandoned blast furnace?

**Bill Stamets** is a Chicago-based writer, photographer and filmmaker.

ing a meeting in London in which Reagan campaign official William Casey is said to have discussed the release of the hostages.

The man raising these allegations is Dirk Stoffberg, a gunrunner and the reputed former leader of a South African death squad that operated in Europe. Stoffberg has alleged that in August 1980 in London he met with Reagan-Bush campaign manager William Casey and Richard Allen, the campaign's foreign policy adviser, to discuss the release of the hostages held in Iran.

Stoffberg was indicted in April 1991 for illegally attempting to sell 1,000 nine millimeter Smith and Wesson handguns to an undercover U.S. Customs agent posing as a Chilean arms dealer. On November 21, 1991 Stoffberg pleaded guilty to one count of violating the Arms Export Control Act.

While he was awaiting sentencing at New York's Metropolitan Correctional Center, Stoffberg provided information concerning his allegations to Spencer Oliver, chief counsel of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Oliver has been investigating the October Surprise allegations for the committee. Diane Francis of the *Financial Post* of Canada reports that Stoffberg handed Oliver about 100 documents that he says back up his claim of the London meeting.

Stoffberg was represented by New York Attorney Thomas F.X. Dunn. Dunn was formerly an attorney for former Israeli spy Ari Ben-Menashe, who was acquitted in 1990 on charges that he attempted to illegally sell U.S.-made transport planes to Iran. Ben-Menashe has claimed first-hand knowledge of the alleged deal between the 1980 Reagan campaign and Iran.

According to Dunn, British intelligence contacted Stoffberg, who had close ties to Iran, in August 1980 to help gain the release of three British missionaries who were hostages in Iran. As Dunn told the *Financial Post*, "Then British intelligence arranged with Stoffberg to have a private meeting with a private U.S. citizen in London, during the 1980 election, and that individual ... asked if he could help in securing the release of American hostages, and he said he would." Dunn did not name the private U.S. citizen but Stoffberg has said that it was Casey.

**Plea bargaining:** Daniel Klaidman reports in the January 27 *Legal Times* that in exchange for Stoffberg's cooperation, Oliver wrote a letter to U.S. District Court Judge Jack Weinstein in which he said Stoffberg had "provided the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs with substantial assistance in an ongoing investigation. ... Although Mr. Stoffberg's cooperation may not lead to any criminal action, the information which he has voluntarily provided to us has already been helpful and, to some extent, has been corroborated by other evidence." Oliver then requested that "Stoffberg's cooperation be taken into consideration by you in the determination of his sentence." The federal sentencing guidelines for Stoffberg's crime range from eight to 14 months.

Against the objections of the U.S. attorney prosecuting the case, Weinstein took the Oliver letter into consideration on January 14, sentencing Stoffberg to two to eight months in prison. In his ruling Weinstein wrote that under other circumstances he would have sentenced Stoffberg to 13 months imprisonment, but because of "the importance of the defendant's cooperation with Congress, a downward departure of three offense levels is appropriate." Stoffberg, who had already spent more than eight months in jail, was released and promptly deported to South Africa by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Although the Justice Department had argued that Oliver's letter was immaterial, it did not appeal Weinstein's decision to take the Oliver letter into consideration during sentencing. Reportedly, the department feared that an unsuccessful appeal would have set further legal precedent.

Some Republican Congress members were furious at Oliver, charging that he overreached his authority. During the debate on whether to investigate the October Surprise, a resolution was put forth by Rep. Bob McEwen (R-OH) to investigate Oliver's actions. It failed 249 to 160.

Rep. Hyde, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee for which Oliver works, was one of those who complained that he had no prior knowledge of Oliver's letter. Hyde told *Legal Times*, "By what authority did Spencer Oliver intervene in this case, and why wasn't the minority notified? The letter should have been signed by somebody in authority. Maybe Mr. Oliver is running the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I didn't know it." A spokesman for Committee Chairman Dante Fascell (D-FL) said that the chairman had authorized the letter.

By and large the Stoffberg story has gone unreported by the mainstream press. Noting this lack of coverage, *Village Voice* media critic James Ledbetter asked "on what grounds does ... the press, content to sniff sheets in Little Rock, pretend that Stoffberg doesn't exist?"



## Electricity in the air

In 1989, investigative reporter Paul Brodeur published *Currents of Death*, his landmark book documenting the dangers of electromagnetic radiation (EMR), the emissions produced by electric devices. Corporate attorneys familiar with Brodeur's work must have shuddered. An earlier Brodeur book, 1974's *Expendable Americans*, which outlined the hazards of asbestos exposure, had awakened Americans to the dangers of the miracle fiber. Shortly before *Expendable Americans* appeared, an appeals court upheld the first victorious asbestos product liability suit. Shortly after Brodeur's book came out, a wave of asbestos litigation flooded U.S. courts. That wave was broken in 1982 when the Manville Corp.—an asbestos manufacturer with \$2 billion in assets—declared bankruptcy to shield it from lawsuits.

Now, it looks like Brodeur's EMR investigations could help spark a new round of lawsuits against a broad swath of corporations. In 1990, Brodeur wrote two stories for *The New Yorker* describing how residents on Meadow Street in Guilford, Conn., were suffering alarming incidences of EMR-related illnesses. Brodeur blamed the injuries on a nearby electric substation and power lines that crisscrossed the neighborhood. Last month, Meadow Street resident Suzanne Bullock and her daughter Melissa filed suit against two Connecticut utility companies. The Bullocks claim that EMR emissions from an electric substation and power lines were responsible for a malignant brain tumor that Melissa contracted. For 10 years, Melissa slept directly beneath the transmission line that carried electricity from a utility substation to her home.

Bullock attorney Michael Koskoff told the *Corporate Crime Reporter*, "The tragedy of Melissa's cancer is the result of decades of neglect by the power companies. ... Through this lawsuit, we are not only seeking redress for Melissa but asking the court to order the power companies to open their files to the public."

A report recently released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cites three studies linking childhood nervous system cancers—which include malignancies of the brain—to EMR exposure. EMR is given off by many items in the home and office—including microwaves, copiers and the video display terminal this story was written on.

## Dying for an economic fix

Unwilling to believe our ears during President George Bush's State of the Union address, we mistakenly wrote last week that the president had declared a 90-day moratorium on federal regulations that prohibit economic growth. In fact, Bush placed a moratorium on *all* federal regulations. While he insisted the move would boost American competitiveness, Bush didn't explain the price American workers will pay for that competitive edge. "[Approximately 289 workers' lives may be lost during this 90-day delay as workers are forced to wait longer for much-needed protection," said Washington's OMB Watch, a public interest group that monitors the government's executive branch. OMB Watch calculated the figure by performing a cost-benefit analysis of 15 significant regulations currently being written by the Department of Labor.

## Off the wall at the Rand Corp.

"Until 1990, America did not seek a compromise [in El Salvador] brokered by the United Nations but pressed for a clear victory through a combination of military and reform measures. In these terms, American policy failed." Sound like *In These Times*' final assessment of the U.S. role in El Salvador's 12-year civil war? In fact, it's an excerpt from a study conducted by the right-leaning Rand Corp. for the U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy. Government policymakers ridiculed the federally-funded study, dismissing it as an example of "early '80s old-think."

A U.S. State Department official quoted in a Knight-Ridder story on the report said the study's "premise was off the wall." The official, who requested anonymity, said, "Our policy goals were to defend the constitutional government and encourage its implementation of political and economic reforms. It was a strategy that the guerrillas realized was working" and so they agreed to negotiate.

But the Rand Corp. report says the civil war, which claimed the lives of an estimated 80,000 people, was a massive policy failure. "While negotiations toward ending the war in El Salvador may at last bear fruit [thanks mainly to external factors], America has failed to reach its goal there—a clear victory for the Salvadoran regime."

## Behind new leader, Greenpeace re-examines itself

HELSINKI, FINLAND—Greenpeace International (GPI) is undergoing a critical self-evaluation and reorientation. After years of unprecedented political and fund-raising successes, the giant environmentalist group is finding it increasingly difficult to provoke public action or generate revenue. (See *In These Times*, Dec. 25.)

Last year, GPI appointed the Finnish lawyer Matti Wuori as its new chair, replacing David McTaggart, who has held the position since Greenpeace was founded in 1971. Wuori's mandate will include both internal trouble-shooting and policy change. He believes that time is running out fast for environmental recovery, but that Greenpeace nevertheless has a role in describing the narrowing options the world faces.

"Strategically, this means that most of our activities will still take place in the industrialized North, because it is from there that environmental policies are generated that have the greatest impact on the world," says Wuori. "At the same time, we are expanding in the South, particularly in Asia and Latin America. We have a global commitment that will hopefully become much more evident in the next few years."

But Wuori is adamant that the days of exporting wisdom and prescribing action for the Third World are over. "We have made mistakes in the past. Some of the solutions we have advocated in the rich North simply don't work or are harmful when applied to other countries."

He points to the banning of drift-net fishing that caused huge losses of dolphins. Whereas the North American and Japanese fishing industries were easily able to meet the new standards, South American fishing economies were thrown into turmoil. "Our campaign had discriminatory effects on the poorer parts of the Western Hemisphere," he concedes.

According to Wuori, GPI's profile will be better defined by its experiences of working with other movements and groups in the Third World. "We have the serious and difficult job of listening to the authentic voice of developing countries, of being capable of articulating and amplifying it," he says.

GPI hopes to sharpen its political work and direct action at the levels of intergovernmental and multinational decision-making. At the same time, Greenpeace needs to rebuild its public support in North America and Europe, where concern for the environment has been readily absorbed into the language of everyday life, but with few tangible results. Big

business and mainstream political parties have also adopted green agendas but seem more concerned with appearing environmentally sound than with actually doing anything.

"Environmentalism has become politicized, and phrases such as 'sustainable development' have become part of political jargon," he says. "This is a problem because when politicians talk about sustainable development they don't mean the same thing as the environmental movement."

As a result, environmentalism has become watered-down to mean just about anything nature-friendly, and



Greenpeace has failed to define its priorities. "We have been accused of having become a sort of environmental supermarket," says Wuori, "dealing in almost all environmentally-related problems. Given our resources, we can't continue like this."

The outstanding environmental issue, both for Greenpeace and other independent green movements, is global warming and its various causes and effects. Wuori hopes that GPI will present a far clearer definition of the problems and the ways in which change can be effected. This means more coordinated and precise information and campaigning, lobbying and direct action.

Wuori would like to see a greater focus on activities in the U.S. "Here you have 5 percent of the world's population consuming 25 percent of resources and polluting on the same scale. If the U.S. got its act together environmentally it would benefit the whole world."

While public awareness of ozone

depletion and global warming is widespread in the industrialized countries, people tend to look for the solution to the problem only in the Third World, as with rainforest protection.

The test for GPI is whether it has the organizational resources and know-how to reassert environmental imperatives with greater urgency and meaning. Much depends on cash, and Wuori is aware that, as the organization expands into poorer areas of the world, the proportion of countries represented in GPI but unable to contribute financially will increase. This will mean greater reliance on Western European and North American contributions, which, in turn, will depend on the ability of GPI and its national offices to raise their campaigning profile while cutting and rationalizing expenses.

Wuori believes that the environmental requisites for all human civilization are falling apart; that unless there is fundamental change the Northern industrial societies as we know them will collapse; and that, with the destruction of the Earth's biosphere, eventually much life on Earth will become unsustainable.

Before that happens, he says, there is likely to be a dramatic increase in regional conflicts over environmental resources as a result of environmental destruction. The industrial world, long-used to relying on global resource exploitation and socio-political inequality for its prosperity, will soon find its environmental chickens coming home to roost.

"Greenpeace is simply trying to indicate the choices we have left, to give them better definition and clarity," says Wuori. "If we in the North decide to go down the drain and take everything with us, then at least it will be a conscious and ethical choice."

—Mark Waller

## THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW

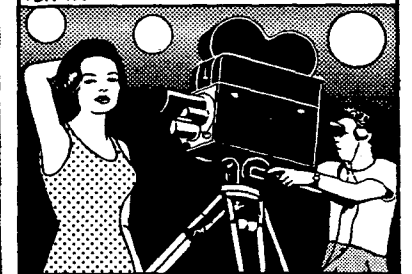
EVERY DAY, IN WORKPLACES AROUND THE COUNTRY, CITIZENS FIND RESpite FROM THE TEDIUM OF THEIR JOBS BY DISCUSSING THE ONE SUBJECT THAT FASCINATES US ALL-- FAMOUS MOVIE STARS!



WE WATCH INTERVIEW PROGRAMS AND TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHO THEY REALLY ARE-- BECAUSE WHOEVER THEY ARE, WE WANT TO BE JUST LIKE THEM!



YES, MOVIE STARS! THEY STAND IN FRONT OF CAMERAS AND RECITE WORDS WRITTEN BY OTHER PEOPLE--AND WE WORSHIP THEM FOR IT!



SOME CITIZENS ARE ACTUALLY LUCKY ENOUGH TO MEET A MOVIE STAR IN PERSON--AN EXPERIENCE WHICH LEAVES THEIR LIVES FOREVER ENRICHED!





By Don Wiener

**O**N THE WATERS OF LAKE GENEVA, JUST OFF the shore from the exclusive Hôtel Paix, a powerful fountain sprays the lake's contents high into the air. Each day, in the hotel courtyard, trade negotiators from around the world—here to revise the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—gather to dine, taking in the beautiful lake view and watching the fountain water as it streams skyward.

As dusk descends on the lake and its foun-

## ECONOMICS

tain, the negotiators meet with executives of multinational companies, who travel downstairs from their \$280-a-night rooms. Over dinner, the negotiators share secrets with the corporate advisers, and reporters mill about trying to confirm news from the day's meetings. Lately, talk has turned to the fate of the new GATT proposal, known as the Dunkel text.

The Dunkel text, offered in late December by GATT Director General Arthur Dunkel, is the result of negotiations that began six years ago in Punta del Este, Uruguay. This series of negotiations, dubbed the Uruguay Round, is the effort by 108 nations to further liberalize global trade. Many details have yet to be worked out, and substantial opposition—from European farmers, American unions and others—could still kill the deal. But the sweeping scope of the discussions here is likely to forever alter the conduct of world trade.

For workers far from the Hôtel Paix—on Central American farms, in Carolina textile mills and on Atlantic fishing boats—the conversations held here may some day have enormous consequences. And away from the clear waters of Lake Geneva, the consequences for the world's environment may be enormous as well.

**Super-GATT:** Since its creation in 1947, GATT has been a contract among nations for trade in goods, its power derived through the willingness of the members to abide by its rules. Currently, GATT's rules are administered by a small staff drawn from the member nations. Although this staff can enforce sanctions on countries that violate GATT, it rarely does. And since there's no separate enforcement agency to mete out punishment, trade disputes often take years to resolve.

Multinational corporations and export-reliant nations, frustrated by the current process, have pressed for stronger enforcement measures in the new GATT. The Dunkel text, if approved, would give GATT a "legal personality," known as the Multilateral Trading Organization (MTO), that could strictly enforce global trading laws.

The new GATT says the MTO "shall enjoy in the territories of each of its members such legal capacity, privileges and immunities as may be necessary for the exercise of its functions." In other words, the MTO will have the power to pry open markets throughout the world. A similar institution, the International Trading Organization (ITO) was proposed in the first GATT, but the U.S. Congress considered the ITO a threat to national sovereignty and refused to approve it.

The new agreement would not only extend GATT's enforcement powers, it would also expand the trade categories GATT oversees.

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## Will GATT negotiators trade away the future?

Agricultural products and textiles, not covered in the current GATT, are included in the Dunkel text. The proposed agreement would also extend GATT oversight from "goods" (machinery, for instance) to "services" (insurance, banking). In order to protect trade in services, GATT would guarantee intellectual property rights—granting protection for patents and copyrights. The MTO would ensure, for instance, that a poor country couldn't reproduce a patented medicine without paying the requisite royalties.

Under the terms of the Dunkel text, the MTO would have the authority to restrict a developing nation's trade in natural resources (goods) if it didn't allow a First World country's financial service company sufficient access to its markets.

Lori Wallach, a lobbyist on trade for Public Citizen, says, "Many developing-country members of GATT are concerned about the effect ... [that] the inclusion of services and intellectual property [will have on] investment policy in global trade disciplines." According to Wallach, "Developing nations feel they must protect such domestic infant industries to create their own infrastructure and increase self-sufficiency."

Environmental, labor and consumer groups in the developing and developed world also warn that the MTO's dispute resolution process promises to be anti-democratic.

• Sub-federal units of national governments—a Canadian province, an Indian state or a Brazilian city—would have to bring their laws into compliance with GATT, even though sub-federal units are not signatories to the GATT contract. Here in the U.S., the constitutional concept of federalism will be tested as GATT panels may some day rule on the trade consequences of municipal recycling laws or state and local minority set-aside programs.

• In any trade dispute, the nation whose law is challenged must prove its law is not

a trade barrier in secret hearings. The new GATT says plainly, "Panel deliberations shall be secret." Under this system, newly-elected federal executives could allow the trade or environmental laws of their predecessors to be overturned by mounting a lackluster defense of the laws. And since the defense would occur in secret, without transcripts, interest groups and the public would never know the quality and vigor of the defense.

• Environmental or health and safety laws (and possibly labor rights and human rights laws) affecting another nation's commerce, no matter how well intended, will be more easily challenged. Again, the executive branch from the challenged nation would defend the law in star-chamber proceedings in Geneva—out of view of media and interest groups back home. Actually, this scenario has already been played out. Several European press reports suggested that the Bush administration did not strongly defend the Marine Mammal Protection Act when a GATT dispute-resolution board declared it illegal over the summer. But, since current dispute hearings are also secret, who's to know?

• Codex Alimentarius, a U.N.-sanctioned body closely wedded to corporate interests,

**The new GATT would create some jobs in the U.S. film and financial-service industries. But Hollywood would have to expand exponentially to offset the million jobs lost in textiles.**

is proposed as the pesticide regulator for agricultural products. Many Codex standards are less stringent than U.S. laws. And any regulation that exceeds Codex standards could be labeled a "non-tariff trade barrier" and overturned by the MTO. So, under Codex rules, the U.S. may be prevented from resisting imports of food contaminated with DDT or other pesticide residues at levels not currently allowed here.

Although broad coalitions are now forming in opposition to the Dunkel text, groundwork for much of the new GATT has already been laid. European nations have already ceded considerable sovereignty over trade and environmental law through the creation of their political and economic union. And the export-driven Japanese have long insisted on a strong central authority to mediate trade disputes.

**Fighting back:** The strongest resistance to the new GATT may come from community-based groups in developing nations. Opposition may also come from the U.S., where the administration is being pressured by both reincarnated isolationists on the right and consumer and environmental groups on the left to oppose the new arrangement.

In addition, family farmers and many agricultural commodity groups in the U.S. and Europe worry that GATT negotiators will sacrifice their small farmers in return for more open markets elsewhere, hopeful that agricultural exports can spur economic growth.

The new GATT gets the Europeans to reduce their subsidies—still not enough for agribusiness or the Bush administration, but enough to bring 250,000 French farmers out in protest. The new GATT would also force the U.S. to accept increased imports of beef, dairy products and a wide range of other items, which would lower prices for U.S. farmers. Some of this food would come here processed, costing jobs in the domestic food-processing and meatpacking industries. At the same time, domestic support programs, including those encouraging conservation or providing marketing loans, would be slashed or eliminated.

Unless U.S. farmers receive some new source of income, thousands of dairy, sugar, grain and livestock farmers would be pushed out of business. The same thing would happen to European farmers, which is why they are trying to sidetrack GATT.

The real winners would be multinationals who would have their pick of depressed agricultural lands. At stake are not just a few farm-support programs but national food security and the survival of rural communities. "This trade proposal removes the ability of the U.S. and other nations to legislate programs that are necessary for the survival of family size versus corporate production around the globe," says Kathy Ozer, policy coordinator for the National Family Farm Coalition.

**Upside?** The new GATT will be good for some U.S. industries. If they get the intellectual property protection they seek, pharmaceutical companies, entertainment conglomerates, financial-service firms and, of course, agribusiness will benefit handsomely. People work in these industries, and some jobs, impossible to quantify, will be created.

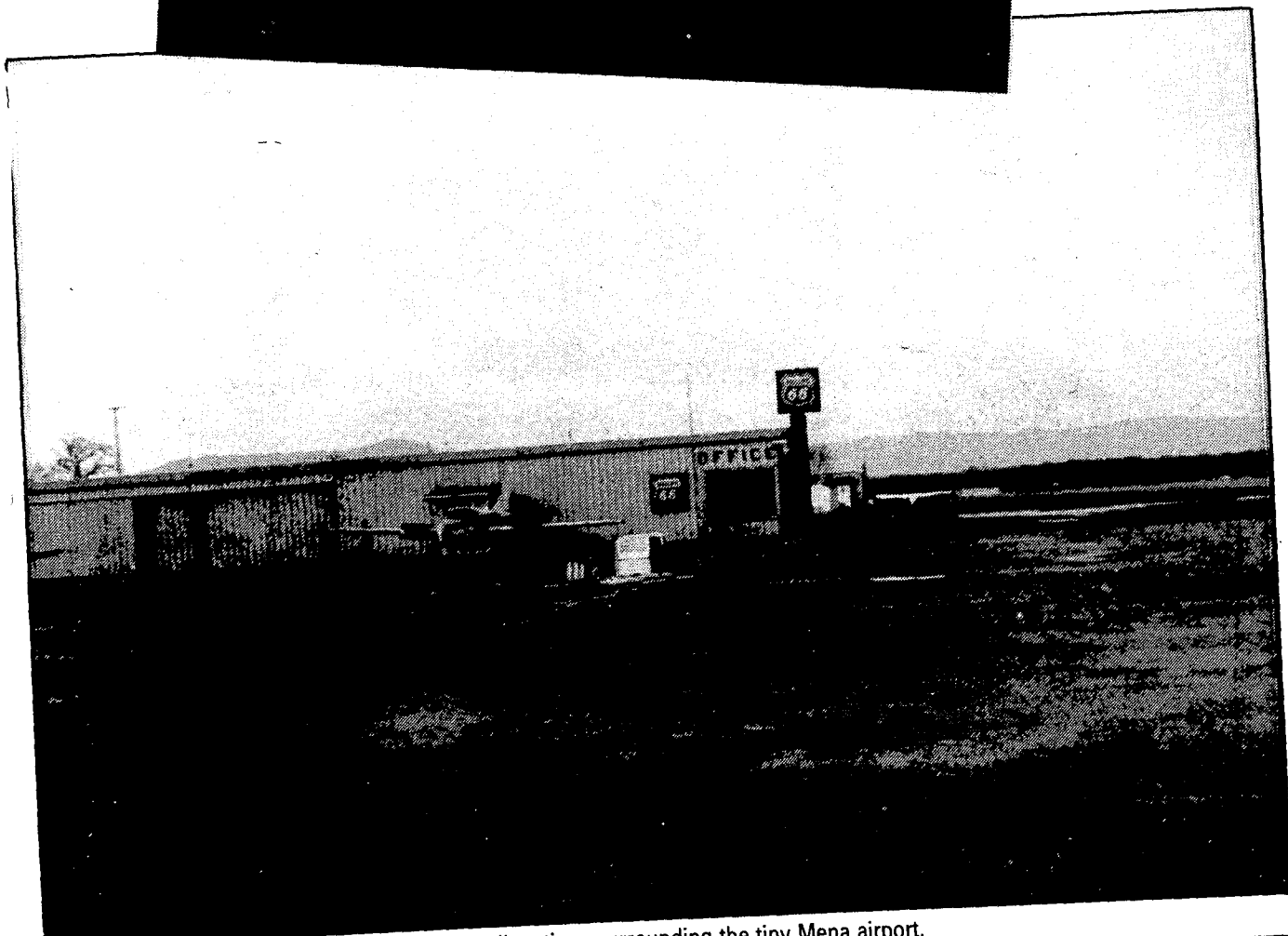
But Hollywood would need to expand its studios a thousand-fold to produce enough

Continued on page 22





## POLITICS



Gov. Bill Clinton has remained silent about allegations surrounding the tiny Mena airport.

A subsequent letter from Field Wasson Jr., the governor's legal counsel, stated that "this office has been unable to find any such records."

The only person known to back up the governor's story is Tommy Goodwin, director of the Arkansas State Police. In a letter to the Arkansas Committee, Goodwin confirmed there is no documentation concerning Clinton's offer to use money from his emergency fund to help Polk County empanel a grand jury to investigate the Mena airport situation. "This was a verbal commitment made to me in his office, to be relayed to the appropriate authorities," Goodwin said.

But those authorities said they were never notified. Clinton's statement to the press in September was news to Joe Hardegree, who in the '80s served as Polk County prosecuting attorney, and to Charles Black, his deputy prosecuting attorney.

Hardegree said he never received the \$25,000, "nor did I hear anything concerning these state funds, from Goodwin or anyone at Arkansas State Police or anyone in the governor's office."

Black, who said he felt compelled in 1988 to launch a state prosecution of Mena after a federal grand jury failed to return any indictments, hand-delivered a letter to the governor asking for assistance. "I did not hear anything back from him," he recalled.

Black said in a recent statement that, even if the \$25,000 had been made available, that amount "would have been tantamount to trying to extinguish a raging forest fire by spitting on it."

A comprehensive investigation of Mena would have cost the state "at least \$1 million," Black added.

No evidence directly links Clinton to the illegal operations at Mena. But a former arms smuggler has implicated the governor's security chief, Arkansas State Police Captain Raymond "Buddy" Young, in one of the controversy's many intrigues. (See accompanying story.) And critics wonder why, if the governor had nothing to hide, he felt the apparent need to fabricate a \$25,000 prosecution-that-wasn't.

"Clinton is either grossly negligent of law enforcement in his own state or he is actively involved in a cover-up," said Mark Swaney, Arkansas Committee president.

**Setting up shop:** To understand how a small airport in a backwoods town could become the center of a controversy with national implications, it is necessary to travel back in time to 1981, when a legendary drug smuggler, the now-deceased Barry Seal, arrived in Mena.

By that time, Seal was already one of the biggest drug smugglers in U.S. history and becoming well-known in his home state of Louisiana, where police pressure was getting to be a bit too much.

According to Terry Capehart, an auxiliary Polk County sheriff's deputy at the time of Seal's arrival, the drug smuggler soon met Freddie Hampton, who owned Rich Mountain Aviation, an aircraft repair shop at the airport.

Shortly thereafter, Capehart, who ran a small machine shop at the airport, began noticing late-night activity at Hampton's hangar and reported the activity to then-Sheriff A.L. Hadaway. Hadaway told Capehart to keep an eye on the goings-on.

Capehart said he soon uncovered a web of illegal activities. Cargo doors were being added to Seal's planes, serial numbers on the tails of planes were altered, and extra fuel tanks were added to planes—all without

# Unsolved mysteries in Clinton country

By Deborah Robinson

MENA, ARK.

**B**ILL CLINTON'S POLITICAL BANDWAGON WAS rocked late last month when former nightclub singer Gennifer Flowers went public with her story of a long-time extramarital affair. But dark clouds hovering over western Arkansas may also pose a threat to the Arkansas governor's presidential candidacy.

This controversy centers on charges that the town of Mena was used in the late '80s as a hub for transshipment of drugs, weapons and foreign troops to and from Central America. The activities have been linked with the contra resupply operation in Central America. And some officials—including an Arkansas congressman—believe the operations at Mena have become the focus of a massive government cover-up.

Bill Duncan, currently an investigator in the Arkansas attorney general's office, told a House subcommittee last summer he had collected evidence detailing "a bizarre mixture of drug smuggling, money laundering and covert operations" at Mena's Intermountain

Regional Airport. This evidence, he said, implicates "contract operatives of the U.S. intelligence services."

It was not the first time Duncan had told Congress about Mena. As an IRS agent, he investigated reports of money laundering at Mena banks for several years and has continued to share his findings with those in Washington who would listen. But inquiries launched by Congress and the General Accounting Office died quickly.

**The great disappearing prosecution:** Unanswered questions about Mena periodically

**The governor says he allocated state funds to prosecute a drug-smuggling and money-laundering case. But local officials never saw the money.**

cally fan the flames of the smoldering scandal, and, now that Clinton is running for president, sparks are igniting once again. The question most consistently asked is why Clinton, who served as the state's chief executive officer during the time the activities allegedly occurred, ignored local officials' pleas for funding to convene a state grand jury investigation.

Clinton, who has remained silent on the Mena issue, attempted last fall to counter complaints about his failure to act. In September, he told reporters he authorized the expenditure of \$25,000 in state funds during the '80s to conduct a local prosecution of the Mena case. "[But] nothing ever came of that," he said.

Clinton, however, has had difficulty backing up his claim. Shortly after his statement to the press, the Arkansas Committee, a student group based at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, filed a Freedom of Information request asking for "letters, memoranda of meetings, telephone records and financial records" relating to the governor's offer of financial assistance for a Mena prosecution.



Federal Aviation Administration approval.

And there was an awful lot of money floating around. Lucia Gonzalez, Hampton's secretary, confided to Capehart that Seal would leave bundles of cash for Hampton. "Hampton's financial status was improving greatly when there was no apparent difference in the amount of work being done at Rich Mountain Aviation," she later told state police.

Hampton's financial picture improved to the point that, in October 1982, he purchased 109 acres of land in Scott County, Ark., and, the following year, he purchased \$150,000 worth of property near Lake Mena.

Seal's operations at Mena prospered in 1982 and 1983, years that state police said were his peak drug-smuggling years. (Seal once admitted he had flown more than 100 drug flights during his smuggling career, each bringing in between 600 and 1,200 pounds of cocaine.)

But then, in February 1984, Seal was convicted on federal drug charges in Miami and handed a 10-year sentence, which he never served. Instead, in March 1984, he secretly began working for the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Seal's operation at Mena continued, though ostensibly under a cloak of immunity granted him by U.S. government agents. (Seal's DEA-backed infiltration of the Medellin cocaine cartel eventually did him in; on Feb. 19, 1986, a Colombian gunman murdered Seal in a Baton Rouge, La., parking lot.)

By 1985, the Arkansas State Police had begun investigating Seal's operations at Mena, and the IRS had begun looking into money-laundering allegations involving local banks. Bill Duncan, then with the IRS, and state police investigator Russell Welch spearheaded the investigations, which focused on Seal's activities previous to his DEA involvement.

Welch said the case kept him so busy that he didn't open another file for two years. "It was the strangest two years of my life," he said. "It's so bizarre I can't begin to describe it; 'twilight zone' would be close."

When Welch began backtracking to try to determine what had been going on at Mena, he found a clear, defined target for investigation. "We were coming up with evidence of illegal activity—cocaine smuggling—and we had to go after him [Seal]."

In the course of his investigation, Duncan interviewed Hampton's employees, as well as employees of Union Bank in Mena, where money from Seal's operation was allegedly being laundered.

Kathy Gann, a secretary at Rich Mountain Aviation, said it was her duty to buy cashier's checks with the money Seal delivered to Hampton. These checks, she said, were then deposited in Union Bank in amounts of less than \$10,000 to get around IRS cash transfer report (CTR) regulations.

**Justice (Department) served?** In 1985, a federal grand jury in Arkansas was empaneled to investigate drug-smuggling allegations involving Seal and his associates at the Mena Airport. Three years later, the grand jury was dismissed without handing down any indictments. This fueled charges by local and state officials that the case had been deliberately mishandled, first by U.S. Attorney Asa Hutchinson and then by his successor, Mike Fitzhugh.

Charles Black, the Polk County deputy prosecuting attorney, said he strongly believes that, if the case had been handled right, there was enough evidence to gain convictions. "Bill Duncan put together a very

well-documented and well-supported recommendation that certain individuals be indicted for money laundering, violations of CTR regulations, and that they be indicted for perjury. My opinion is there ought to be an investigation of the way it was handled by the federal authorities," said Black.

An unidentified grand juror has said the grand jury could have indicted two Polk County businessmen on charges of money laundering and conspiracy to traffic in drugs, but Fitzhugh focused his prosecution on Seal, who was already dead.

There were other inconsistencies in the case. While it is standard practice that case investigators be called to testify, the U.S. attorney's office did not call either Welch or Duncan. According to the juror, when the grand jury asked Fitzhugh to bring Duncan before the panel, he said Duncan was in Washington and "not available." But Duncan, who had been transferred out of state, said he was at the IRS regional office in Atlanta waiting to be called to testify.

Through a quirk of circumstance, however, Welch eventually took the stand. During one of the grand jury hearings, he had

been spotted in the hall by one of the grand jurors. "She got with the others and they told Mike Fitzhugh they wanted to talk to me," he recalled.

Out of a list of 20 witnesses compiled by investigators, only three were subpoenaed to testify. Not called to testify were Seal's family members, his employees who were familiar with the day-to-day operations of his business and some convicted drug smugglers who had knowledge of Seal's activities.

## The controversy began when infamous drug smuggler Barry Seal set up shop in Mena, Ark., in 1981.

And some of the witnesses who were called to testify later said they were not asked the right questions. Kathy Gann, Hampton's secretary who had earlier supplied state police with firsthand information about

Rich Mountain Aviation's CTR violations, said Hutchinson did not ask her about money laundering at local banks.

"He asked my name, where I lived, where I used to work and where I was working now," she said.

There is at least some indication that Fitzhugh's fumbling of the case was not accidental. Two acquaintances of U.S. Assistant Attorney Steve Snyder said that Snyder confided to them that his office had been ordered to drop the case. Horton Elzea and Carl Smith told local newspapers that the orders reportedly came from the Miami DEA. Snyder would not comment on the allegations.

IRS investigator Bill Duncan came up against similar roadblocks. Duncan told several congressional committees that IRS lawyers advised him to lie to Congress about whether the Mena investigation had been hampered. Duncan also said IRS attorneys instructed him not to mention an unsubstantiated report by an employee of Freddie Hampton that former U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese had accepted a \$350,000 bribe

*Continued on page 11*

## An arms smuggler claims that Clinton's security chief tried to frame him

Self-described CIA "asset" Terry Reed claims that his odyssey into the inner-workings of the contra-supply operation ultimately brought him smack up against Gov. Bill Clinton's security chief, Arkansas Police Capt. Raymond "Buddy" Young.

Reed is currently in hiding and is unavailable to the media. His account of the events comes largely from his testimony in a suit filed by Southern Air Transport against a Miami, Fla., television station. Southern Air was involved in the contra-supply operation in which Reed claims to have worked.

When Reed was training Latin American pilots at a remote airstrip near Mena, Ark., he received a "promotion" late in 1985, according to his testimony. The offer, Reed said, came from William Cooper, whom Reed knew from his days at Air America, a CIA-affiliated air company. Reed said that Cooper told him about a business venture in Mexico involving the warehousing and marketing of large machine tools. (Cooper was later killed when his plane, carrying supplies to the contras, was shot down over Nicaragua.)

Reed packed up and set out for Guadalajara, Mexico. The business was actually a cover for an operation to smuggle guns from the U.S. into Central America, according to Reed's testimony. He soon discovered that it was also a front for another operation. Reed said he found over a ton of cocaine in a large Southern Air Transport shipping container with his company's name on it. After finding the container in a hangar he used for his machine-tool business, Reed went to his boss, a man named Max Gomez, and told him he wanted out of the Mexico operation. "Max Gomez" proved to be an alias for Felix Rodriguez, a CIA operative who worked with then-Vice President George Bush's national security adviser, Donald Gregg.

For Reed, getting out of the contra-supply network wouldn't be easy. After he arrived back in Arkansas, Reed and his wife, Janice, discovered that they were wanted on four counts of mail fraud. The charges, Reed maintained, were part of a frame-up to discredit him and cast doubt

on what he might have to say about the contra-supply operation.

It was Gov. Bill Clinton's security chief, Buddy Young, who helped bring the charges against Reed. The mail-fraud charges stemmed from the return of a plane Reed had reported missing nearly five years before. Reed's Piper Turbo Arrow had disappeared March 12, 1983, after Reed left it at the Joplin, Mo., airport for repairs.

The disappearance, according to Reed, came a few days after he had been approached by Oliver North about participating in a program called "Project Donation." In the program, said Reed, people "donated" planes and other high-dollar items to the Reagan administration's covert operation in Nicaragua by allowing them to be stolen, then collecting the insurance money. Reed said that he had declined to "donate" his plane, but that the plane was stolen anyway.

Shortly after the Reeds left Mexico, the plane was discovered in Reed's hangar at the North Little Rock airport by Tommy Baker, a Little Rock private investigator. Young then used Baker's information to get charges filed against the Reeds. The charges were based on the fact that the Reeds had collected insurance money on the plane.

A U.S. federal district court later threw out the charges for lack of evidence. The Reeds are now bringing charges of their own. In July 1991, they filed suit at a federal court in Little Rock against Buddy Young and Tommy Baker. In their suit, the Reeds charge that Young and Baker conspired to fabricate a federal crime, and that they gave false testimony, resulting in the 1988 indictment against the Reeds.

The Reed suit makes a case for a frame-up by Baker and Young, alleging that:

- Baker testified in the Reeds' mail-fraud trial that he discovered their plane as he just happened to pass by the hangar, when the door blew open. But, according to the suit, when Baker interviewed Harriet Barrett of Barrett Aviation at the North Little Rock airport, he told her he was working on a tip about the airplane.

- Young said Baker contacted him about the plane on Oct. 8, 1987, and asked him to run a check on the plane's tail number with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Young testified that information from the NCIC showed the tail number to be phony. Young said a second NCIC check was run the following day, after Baker located what he believed to be the correct tail number in a logbook on the plane. The number was that of Reed's stolen plane. According to the Reeds' suit, however, NCIC records show that Young first accessed the organization's data base on October 7, at 5:59 p.m., in order to run the actual registration number of the Reeds' plane. On that same day, at 6:01 p.m., Young checked the phony number through NCIC, according to the Reeds' suit.

- Though Baker claims to have found the plane on October 8, Joplin, Mo., police department records show Young contacted the department on October 7 concerning the stolen plane, according to the suit.

- When Young turned the Reed case over to the FBI for further investigation, he told the bureau that Reed might be involved in Central and South American drug trafficking. Young claimed the information about Reed came from the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), a government operation staffed by representatives of every federal investigation and enforcement agency. But according to the suit, EPIC had no file on Reed at that time.

- In June 1988, Young dictated his reports on the case and backdated them to October 1987, according to the suit.

In his ruling on the mail-fraud case against the Reeds, U.S. District Court Judge Frank Theis said that both Young and Baker had showed a "reckless disregard for the truth" in their testimony.

The Reeds' case against Baker and Young is still pending. Reed said that if it comes to trial, it could provide new details on North's contra-supply program. Reed also hopes to prove that Baker and Young were operating on instructions from a higher authority. —D.R.



## Arms cuts

Continued from page 3

sees a smaller scale military role in combatting drug trafficking and in conducting peacekeeping operations. He defines the threats to the United States in terms of "Iraq equivalents" that have to be matched by U.S. "Desert Storm equivalents" (plus a few "Panama equivalents" for jobs such as removing Noriega from power). "Saddam Hussein is the prototype or model for the post-Soviet threat," he argued in a recent speech.

No doubt there are potential military threats in the world. Even in a world with a strong U.N., there could be justification for U.S. military actions. But Aspin does not rethink at all the current underlying assumption that the U.S. should be the world's policeman. Nor does he clearly link the interests of U.S. citizens to these police actions, except to assume that the U.S. has a vital stake, above

all others, in defining and enforcing the "New World Order." Worst of all, Aspin perpetuates the flawed thinking of the post-World War II era that first of all seeks military solutions to world conflicts and problems.

Linking the defense budget to such threats will undoubtedly lead to the invention of new threats and to the kind of "threat inflation" that fueled the Cold War arms race. Also, there will be the temptation to invent new uses for the intelligence agencies and the military, putting them to work on problems best handled in other ways and by other agencies.

"What worries me is that while people should be properly concerned about proliferation," former Harvard Professor William Kaufman said, "there's a propensity to exaggerate in order to justify things that would otherwise not make sense."

Many Democrats have been waiting to take their lead from Aspin. His redefinition of

threats, as well as other considerations, will give many of them new excuses to minimize military cuts. "No one really knows what the threat is," Kosiak argued, "and you hear about concerns like the industrial base and job loss and not drawing down too fast and undermining morale almost as much as you hear about the threat. Those concerns cut across party lines."

**Real security:** Ultimately a strategy to cut defense spending must be linked to a redefinition of national security and national interest and to a more subtle foreign policy that emphasizes alternatives to military solutions. Military strategy, here and elsewhere, must focus on defense and cooperative security arrangements, backed by peacekeeping operations of the U.N. or regional groups, with military strikes against renegades a last, remote resort.

Economic vitality in this country, and economic equity between the rich and poor

nations, are essential for Americans' sense of security and for reducing conflict in the world. There are three basic alternatives for use of any peace dividend, running roughly from right to left: reduce the deficit, cut taxes, invest in the human and physical underpinnings of the economy (a prescription that applies to both the United States and the underdeveloped countries).

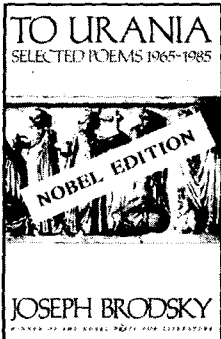
Deficit reduction will undermine demand and depress the economy, making transition from the militarized economy harder and growth slower. Tax cuts could stimulate demand, but much of the increased consumption would be drained by imports. Public investment will sustain stronger demand for domestic goods and services while yielding stronger returns in the short and long run. While there is some question about what would be the most effective way for government to aid in conversion of military industries, no conversion strategy will work except in the context of a strong program of domestic investment.

If the public is not yet ready to embrace the deep defense cuts that are both justified and necessary, a near-majority leans left in how to use the savings. In the Greenberg-Lake poll, 32 percent of respondents favored investment in job creation, education and the environment, with another 15 percent supporting spending on housing, health care and the needs of the poor. Only 9 percent supported tax cuts for business, although 19 percent wanted middle-class tax cuts and 25 percent wanted deficit reductions.

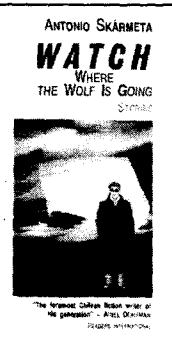
The time may be ripe for deep cuts in military spending and renewed domestic investment, but many hurdles remain. A political battle will still have to be waged to win over both the American public and timid Democratic leaders to a new vision of America's place in the world. □

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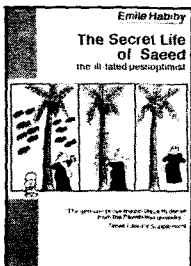
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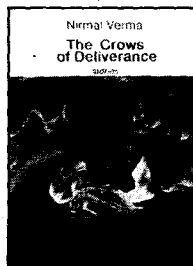
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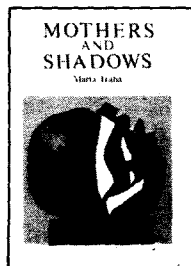
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# Mena

Continued from page 9

from Barry Seal. Duncan refused to perjure himself—and his boss, Paul Whitmore, backed him up. Duncan subsequently left the IRS because of the situation. Whitmore, who stayed with the service, said that since the incident he has lost out on promotions and has been transferred among jobs.

**Possible motives:** Why would the federal government want to impede a probe of Mena? There are a number of theories. According to one school of thought, promoted by Freddie Hampton, Rich Mountain Aviation's activities at the Mena Airport were connected to a highly secret multimillion-dollar covert program of high technology involving the Star Wars program. If true—which is unlikely—this theory would explain the tight security Hampton set up around his hangars and his attempts to stop police from driving up at night unannounced.

Seal's relationship with the DEA fueled a more credible theory that the Mena airport was part of a sting operation to catch international drug smugglers. Seal was, in fact, gathering intelligence on the Medellín drug cartel for the DEA in the mid-'80s. For example, experts say Seal was the unnamed source of information for the 1984 *Washington Times* story claiming the Nicaraguan government was allowing the cartel to use a Managua airstrip as a transshipment point.

But the fact that Seal was working for the U.S. government does not preclude another theory—that the Reagan administration's illegal contra-supply operation was being carried out in part at Mena and that contra troops may have been trained in the area. Though far from conclusive, the information supporting this theory includes:

- There are numerous reports of sightings in the Ouachita Forest of people in camouflage brandishing weapons, practicing river crossings and conducting other military-type maneuvers. The reports were received by Montgomery County Sheriff James Carmack and Scott County Game Warden Brian McKenzie. Both Scott and Montgomery Counties border Polk County, where Mena is located.

- Six "military-type" weapons, including an M-1 carbine and mini-14 carbine were found hidden in several locations around Montgomery County. The stocks of the guns were painted camouflage and the barrels were painted green.

- There are reports of numerous flights of aircraft in and out of an isolated Nella, Ark., pasture owned by Freddie Hampton.

- Two jailed drug pilots—Michael Tolliver and Gary Betzner—claim Barry Seal was a contra supply pilot.

- Rod Stufflebeam, a car salesman in Van Buren, Ark. (about 80 miles north of Mena), said Eugene Hasenfus—the sole survivor of a contra supply plane shot down over Nicaragua on Oct. 5, 1986—had walked onto his lot in August of that year to buy a cargo van.

- Ernal Cunningham, a Mena resident, claims that he drove Oliver North from the Mena airport to a local restaurant. Though Cunningham didn't know who North was the day he gave him the ride, both he and his son later recognized North when they saw him on television testifying in the Iran-contra hearings. (North's journals, it should be noted, do not indicate any trips to Mena.)

**Facts or "wonderful stories"?** The contra supply theory is further supported by information that Seal may have been in-

involved in covert government operations as early as 1972. Seal was arrested in New Orleans on July 1 of that year for piloting a DC-3 loaded with 14,000 pounds of C-4 plastic explosive. The explosives were being smuggled into Mexico for anti-Castro Cubans trained by the CIA.

Also supporting the contra theory was recent testimony from Terry Reed, a self-described CIA "asset." (See *In These Times*, Feb. 6, 1991.)

Reed, who had worked with the CIA's Air America in Southeast Asia, said he learned in 1983 that parts of the contra-supply program were being carried out in Arkansas. The information allegedly came from a U.S. operative named John Cathey. (Reed said he later discovered Cathey's real name was Oliver North.) North told Reed he would be contacted about the Arkansas operation by a man named Barry Seal.

Reed outlined his activities at Mena earlier this year in a deposition given in connection with a suit filed by Southern Air Transport

**"I have never seen a whitewash job like what has been executed in this case," said Rep. Bill Alexander (D-AR). "There has been a conspiracy of the grandest magnitude that has not been prosecuted."**

against a Miami, Fla., television station. The station reported that the air cargo company transported narcotics into the U.S. as part of the contra-supply operation in Central America.

In his deposition, Reed said he was contacted by Seal in the fall of 1983, shortly after he opened his ultralight aircraft business in Arkansas. Reed said he understood at the time that Seal was a CIA "asset" who had a contract with the agency to train pilots somewhere in western Arkansas. Reed said Seal asked him to come on board as a consultant. "I was to advise him of the location for the construction of a training facility," Reed said. The facility ultimately selected was Freddie Hampton's property at Nella.

As part of his duties, Reed developed a syllabus for flight training and began training pilots. Most of the trainees were Latin Americans, according to Reed. He said he trained approximately 25 flyers from June 1984 to September 1985, focusing on nighttime air drops. The planes used were based at the Mena airport, according to Reed.

But one person who doesn't buy the theory that a branch of the contra-supply operation was carried out at Mena is Jack Blum, former chief counsel for Massachusetts Democratic Sen. John Kerry's 1988 subcommittee that investigated the contras. The panel looked into allegations that profits from drug sales were used to finance the Nicaraguan rebels at a time when it was illegal for the federal government to fund them. "You could not, in my judgment, have flown a group of contras into that part of Arkansas without everybody in town knowing it," he said.

During his investigation, Blum said he was unable to substantiate "wonderful stories" that Mena was being used as a contra train-

ing camp. But Blum does believe that Barry Seal used Mena as a base of operation and that planes were being modified at the airport. "If you wanted to fit out a plane for all kinds of nefarious activities, you couldn't find a better place," he said, "because the airport is largely unsupervised by any kind of authority. If I was interested in doing something bad, I might be interested in coming to Mena."

**Calls for new probes:** Last year, two state officials attempted once more to get a federal investigation of Mena.

In September, Arkansas Attorney General Winston Bryant and Rep. Bill Alexander, both Democrats, turned over several boxes of evidence to Lawrence Walsh's Office of Independent Counsel in hopes that Walsh would extend his investigation into Mena. Alexander told reporters the information establishes a definite Iran-contra connection with Mena.

Included in the files were depositions, FBI files and Arkansas State Police investigative records—documents that show Mena "was a staging area for the war in Central America," according to Alexander. "I have never seen a whitewash job like what has been executed in this case," said Alexander. "There has been a conspiracy of the grandest magnitude that so far has not been prosecuted."

After the meeting in Washington, the Iran-contra prosecutor's office asked Bryant to collect additional information about the Mena connection. Walsh, however, has not dispatched investigators to Arkansas.

Though questions have been raised as to whether the statute of limitations has run out on alleged illegal activities at Mena, Alexander said the limitations have not expired if an ongoing criminal conspiracy can be proven.

Efforts to reopen the Mena case have drawn fire from some Mena residents. Regina Walker, president of the Chamber of Commerce, has said Mena is being victimized so Bryant and Alexander can use the controversy to political advantage.

But not all Arkansans share Walker's opinion. Last year, the Arkansas Committee presented Winston Bryant with 1,000 signatures of Arkansas residents who want an investigation into Mena allegations.

The group has kept questions about Mena in the public eye, picketing outside federal buildings in Little Rock and Fayetteville and outside U.S. Attorney Mike Fitzhugh's office in Fort Smith. Mark Swaney, Arkansas Committee president, says the group's focus in 1992 will be on Bill Clinton.

Over the past year, the Arkansas Committee has repeatedly contacted Clinton to talk with him about the Mena situation and encourage him to take a stand on the issue, but Clinton has refused to respond, Swaney said.

The Arkansas Committee also questioned Clinton's issuance of Arkansas Traveller certificates—key-to-the-city-type honors—in March 1988 to Adolfo and Mario Calero and Gen. John Singlaub, three prominent figures in the Iran-contra affair. (The three officials came to the state for a political function; there is no evidence that they visited Mena.) When a member of the Arkansas Committee attempted to obtain copies of the applications for the certificates from the governor's office, Clinton's press aide, Carmen Rodriguez Fowler, first denied records of the certificates existed. When the group said it could produce copies of the certificates, Fowler found records showing that she herself had issued the certificates.

Mike Gauldin, Clinton's press secretary, called the Arkansas Committee's allegations

"ridiculous" and denied Clinton was involved in a cover-up of the Mena case. "We don't know everything that went on at Mena and, so far, we've been unable to find out."

Mayor Jerry Montgomery shrugs off stories about Mena, saying the whole thing has evolved into a political issue. "It seems like every time there's a presidential election, the cloud of suspicion arises," Montgomery said.

Recent developments at Mena Airport, however, have cast their own cloud of suspicion. In September 1991, the DEA seized a twin-engine plane at the airport and detained its pilot, a Colombian named Frank Battiston-Posada. Polk County Sheriff Mike Oglesby said the plane was confiscated under the drug-seizure law.

Federal forfeiture proceedings filed early this year in Fort Smith U.S. District Court claim the 1968 DeHavilland Twin Otter was linked to Colombian cartels. In the court documents, DEA agents state that Colombian cartels prefer Twin Otters for cocaine trafficking. The planes are used to carry coca paste from the mountains of Peru to jungle processing labs in Colombia, the documents state.

The Mena airport is known as one of the fastest and most economical stopovers in the Western Hemisphere for aircraft rehabilitation, painting, repair and modification. The airport has also become a major employer in the region, and plans are underway to expand it by installing a 6,000-foot crosswind runway. Montgomery says continuing negative publicity could hurt Mena's chances of getting grants for the expansion.

But others say there are more far-reaching issues to be considered. Charles Black believes what happened could happen again if a strong message is not sent to Washington. "It shouldn't die down," he said. "That's just basically condoning corruption. It sends a message to people at the federal level. It just reinforces corruption in the justice system. And that's indefensible."

Deborah Robinson is a newspaper reporter in northwest Arkansas. Her husband, Tom Brown, is a member of the Arkansas Committee.

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# PRIVATE

By Larry Agran

**I**N FRANK CAPRA'S CLASSIC 1939 FILM, *MR. Smith Goes to Washington*, idealistic freshman Sen. Jefferson Smith heads for our nation's capital unaware of the corrupt system that awaits him. He finds all too quickly that Lincoln's words—"government of the people, by the people, for the people"—fall on deaf ears as a few political power brokers usurp America's political system for their own profit.

Here in 1992, a real-life presidential-primary process is mired in the same corruption. A "good ol' boy" network of political insiders and media moguls determines which candidates are heard and, in many states, which candidates are placed on the ballot.

**Up from the trenches:** I declared my candidacy for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination last August 22. I issued a bold platform: an immediate 50 percent cut in military spending and the transfer of those savings to meet our needs here at home—health care, education, public safety, environmental protection and rebuilding our cities and towns.

I also brought to the Democratic presidential race a unique perspective—that of a candidate who had served as a local elected official in "America's trenches," our cities and towns. Unlike senators and governors who are isolated from their constituencies, most citizens can reach their mayor by phone or by a visit to their city hall.

All I asked—and, indeed, all I expected—from the party and the national media was a chance to present my platform to the voters. But the media's response ranged largely from apathy to derision.

Still, some took note. I, along with Paul Tsongas, was invited to address the Tri-State Democrats Unity Dinner in Sioux City, Iowa. (At the time, we were the only declared candidates.) The hosts also invited potential candidates Tom Harkin and Bill Clinton to speak. All four speakers were treated as equals. My speech was broadcast on C-SPAN with the others, and I was included in the group photo of the candidates.

But if you asked the national media, I wasn't there. The *New York Times* published a version of the group photo in which I had been cropped out. (As Casey Stengel used to say, "You can look it up"—the national edition, September 8, page 16). I'm standing just off to the right, where the other candidates are gesturing.) The extensive article on the event quoted the other three speakers at length—two of whom were not even declared candidates. The *Times* deigned only to mention my presence with one sentence near the end of the report, calling me a "dark horse" candidate.

Two weeks later, I was one of seven announced or potential candidates who addressed the Democratic National Committee (DNC) convention in Los Angeles. Most national media chose to focus only on "prominent" non-candidates such as Jesse Jackson or on Mario Cuomo, who wasn't even there.

Soon after, other candidates entered the race, and the national media totally dropped

me from their reports. With this nationwide media blackout in place, I found that one political door after another was being slammed in my face.

For openers, such a blackout severely hampers a candidate's ability to raise campaign funds. After the Watergate scandal, a series of reforms were enacted to end the undue influence of big money in presidential campaigns. One reform was the introduction of "federal matching funds." A presidential candidate can get contributions matched dollar-for-dollar by the federal government if he or she can raise a minimum of \$5,000 from small donations in each of 20 different states.

Yet this reform favors "nationally prominent" candidates—individuals who are covered by the national media. If the media choose to ignore a candidate, he or she has a great deal of difficulty reaching potential donors. And because these nationally prominent candidates qualify for federal matching funds first, they can buy airtime on TV and radio to enhance their name recognition—further widening the gap between themselves and lesser-known candidates.

**The New Hampshire experience:** While the influence of television on presidential politics is a relatively recent phenomenon, the influence of money is as old as politics itself. Corruption and self-interest are as persuasive as ever, but, in collaboration with the national media, it raises the ugly Orwellian specter of thought control.

The day I announced my candidacy, my campaign staff contacted the office of the New Hampshire State Democratic Party and indicated my intent to participate in all state party-sponsored primary events. After some initial cooperation, the state party said it would no longer include us unless we began to "donate" to party coffers. The party planned to hold its state convention on November 2 and was inviting candidates to speak. We were told that I would have to make a substantial "donation" to the state party in exchange for "speaking privileges."

I refused. I believe in free speech, not fee speech.

After we objected, my staff was told that I would be allowed to participate, although the details were kept vague, despite our repeated phone calls demanding more information. Finally, five days before the convention, we were informed that while those candidates who had donated money to the party would be allowed 20 minutes to speak, I was relegated to a second tier of "minor candidates" who would be allowed only five minutes to speak.

We also found out that a televised presidential candidates' debate was scheduled for the night before the convention. When my staff asked the state Democratic Party about the event, they denied that such a debate was planned. When we confronted them with the evidence, I was simply told, "You're not invited."

At the next day's convention, I watched as all of the "major" candidates exceeded their allotted 20 minutes. When it was my turn to speak, I tried desperately to describe—in less than five minutes—my "New American Security" proposal for transferring military spending

back to the homefront.

When I was concluding my speech, after seven minutes, someone shut off my microphone. I continued to speak; fortunately, the party didn't control the C-SPAN feed. But soon, music blared over the loudspeakers, drowning me out.

Afterward, I was informed that in the future I would be excluded from all party-sponsored candidate forums.

I tested this arrogant blockade on December 19 at a health-care forum in Nashua, sponsored by the state party. The six "major" candidates were all invited; I was not. The event was moderated by Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV).

As Rockefeller began his opening remarks, I stood in the audience and demanded to be included. I said that I had been campaigning in New Hampshire full time since November 1, that I had debated all but one of the other candidates present at forums across the country and that I had as much right as they did to participate. Rockefeller informed me that I had to sit down and be quiet or else he would have me removed. I refused, and two police officers quickly closed in on me.

As they began to drag me away, the audience began shouting, "Let him speak," "Let us choose," and some of the other candidates gestured to Rockefeller to invite me to the dais. He did so reluctantly. Afterward, he took me aside and growled, "Don't push your luck."

**News blackout:** About the same time, DNC, under the leadership of Chairman Ron Brown, began a systematic process to exclude lesser-known candidates from party events in many states.

I learned that in late November the DNC had quietly dropped me from its mailing list of candidates. I found that I was now being excluded from party events such as the Association of State Party Chairs' convention in Chicago and the Florida Democratic Party convention. Brown refused to return my phone calls.

Appearing in late December on ABC's *Nightline*, Brown said he hoped to eliminate all but three candidates from the race after the New Hampshire primary and to have all but one candidate eliminated by "Super Tuesday," which is March 10.

Once again, this arbitrary exclusion was aided and abetted by the national media. In November, seven TV networks—CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, C-SPAN, Fox and PBS—announced that they each had agreed to host one debate. Each retained the discretion to determine the event's format and which candidates would be invited, although the series was negotiated with the blessing of the DNC.

NBC was first. When I was excluded, I demanded time and again that Bill Wheatley of NBC News tell me his criteria for selecting candidates. After several phone calls from our legal counsel, it was clear there were no criteria; NBC simply selected candidates anointed by the DNC. When we sent Wheatley documentation regarding the national scope of our campaign, he arrogantly claimed that my exclusion was based solely on his "general news judgment."

MacNeil/Lehrer of PBS was second. I had expected better treatment from the MacNeil/Lehrer *NewsHour* than from the privately-owned networks. PBS claims a rich tradition of

providing alternative, quality programming un beholden to special interests. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is financed by taxpayer dollars and by viewer subscriptions, so it has a greater moral obligation to provide the voter with as wide an exposure as possible to all serious candidates.

I'd been featured twice before on MacNeil/Lehrer. A 15-minute interview by Roger Mudc aired on August 30, followed by excerpts broadcast on September 23 of my speech to the DNC convention in Los Angeles.

So it came as a shock to me when Dan Werne of MacNeil/Lehrer informed me in early January that my campaign was not "newsworthy," despite the fact that in two polls taken that week I had moved ahead of Jerry Brown in New Hampshire and was right on Tom Harkin's heels. Brown and Harkin were invited to the debate, but I was not.

Nine days before the MacNeil/Lehrer telecast, I debated four of the "major" candidates at a U.S. Conference of Mayors' forum in Washington, D.C. According to the *New York Times*, "dozens of mayors meeting here today seemed to agree on one thing: The single candidate who truly understands urban needs is Larry Agran." But still, MacNeil/Lehrer insisted that I was not "newsworthy."

At this point, the future looks bleak for ending the national media blackout. Only one more nationally-broadcast debate is planned before the New Hampshire primary—on February 16, two days before the election. It will be sponsored by the League of Women Voters and will be broadcast on CNN.

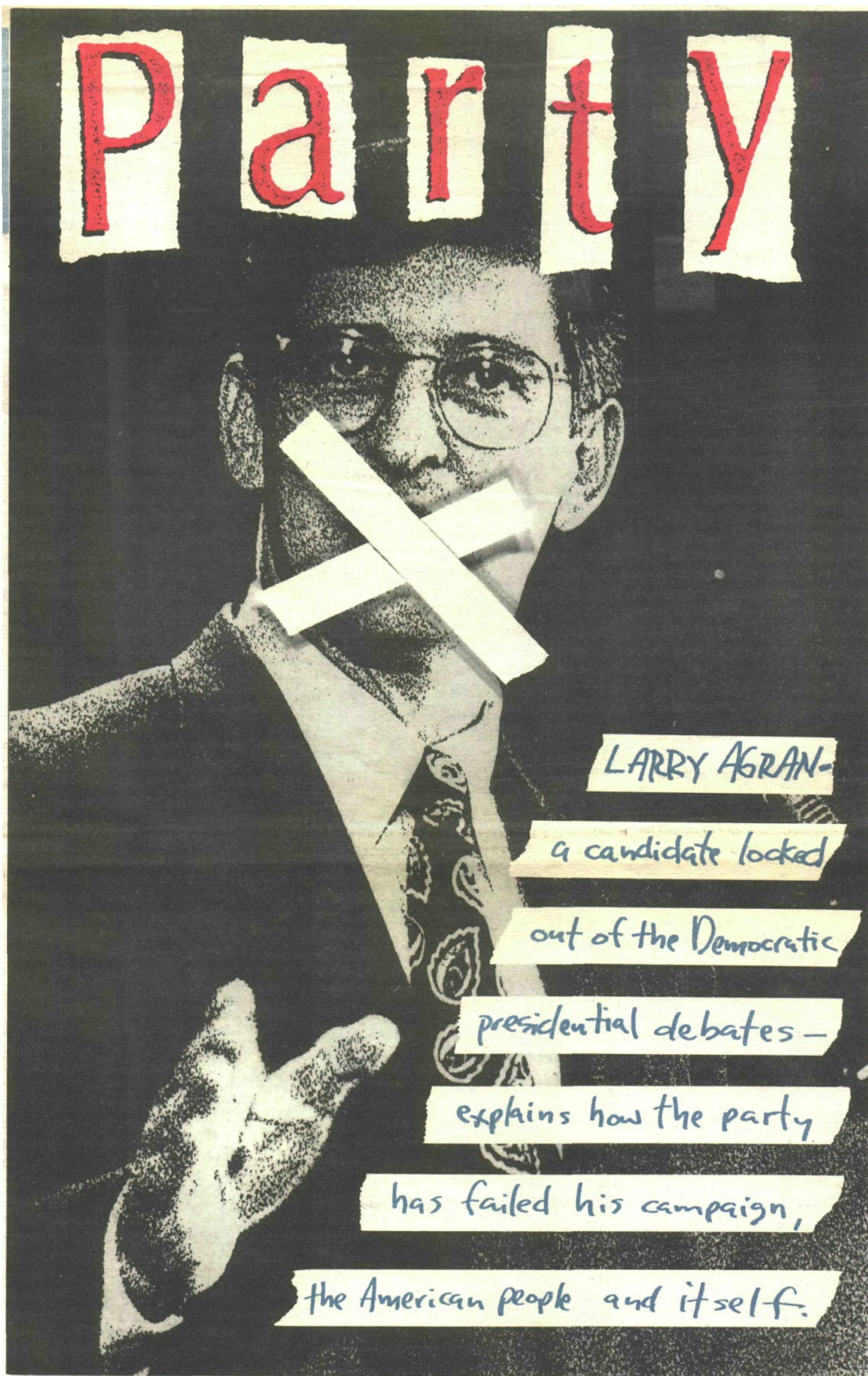
The League has informed me that "you are not a significant candidate for the Democratic Party nomination" and that it intends to limit participation only "to candidates who present a significant national candidacy for the Democratic nomination for president."

In my view, this is an even greater sin than those on the souls of NBC and MacNeil/Lehrer. I have in my hand a letter sent on November 24 to League supporters by Susan Lederman, chair of the League's Education Fund. The letter solicits a contribution of \$300 or more to underwrite the cost of the debate. In her letter, Lederman wrote: "Primary debates are really the most important debates of any election cycle because they allow voters to get to know their parties' candidates ... give lesser known candidates a chance to be heard ... and get citizens excited about the issues that will be decided by their final votes next November."

This latest act of exclusion is not only an act of hypocrisy but also suggests that the League used fraudulent means to raise funds from its supporters across America.

**Media decisions:** The final flaw in the electoral process is how candidates qualify for primary or caucus ballots. In many states, the law restricts ballot access by directing the secretary of state, a few party officials or some committee to have sole discretion in determining which candidates appear on the primary ballot. Typically, the law directs the secretary of state to place on the ballot only those candidates "generally recognized in the national news media."





This law places in the hands of Dan Rather, Peter Jennings and Tom Brokaw the power to decide which candidates ultimately appear on the ballot. If the network news bureaus decide that a candidate isn't "newsworthy," then of course the candidate doesn't appear on the nightly news. And, as I've found out, if you're not on the nightly news, you're not a "serious" candidate—at least, in certain states.

For example, in Florida candidates can appear on the ballot only if a committee com-

prised of the secretary of state and party elders approves it. After being excluded from addressing the state party convention in December, it was no surprise that they also excluded me—and several other candidates—from the ballot. This prompted the American Civil Liberties Union to sue the state of Florida, arguing that state law allows a party to censor the ballot.

On January 30, Federal Court Judge Federico Moreno ruled that "to force a political party to accept as its standard bearer an individual

whose views are not shared by the same party not only violates the party's constitutional freedom of association but would run contrary to the very reason for the existence of a political party." Moreno went on to suggest that to "get access" an excluded candidate should simply form his or her own party, as David Duke did in 1988.

This chilling ruling suggests that registered Democrats and Republicans can no longer go to the primary election to choose their party's

nominee. Instead, they may only choose among those whom the party bosses designate. If Ron Brown says that you get to vote only for Bill Clinton, you vote only for Bill Clinton.

**Five-step plan:** It's clear from this sorry track record that only a handful of powerful people are deciding for millions of Americans which candidates they'll see and hear and which candidates they won't. Even though my name will appear on ballots in at least 30 to 40 states, it's possible I'll never be seen or heard in a nationally televised debate.

We need immediate federal legislation to correct the flaws in this process. To that end, I am proposing the following steps:

1. Federal Communications Commission guidelines should require any networks broadcasting candidates' debates to clearly specify their criteria for selecting the participants. These criteria should be available to public inspection before participants are chosen and should be stated at the beginning of the telecast. The network should also be required to have in place an appeals process and to state on the air which candidates were excluded and why.

Censorship? Hardly. After all, under federal law the airwaves belong to the American people.

2. In this era of cable TV and satellite broadcasts, there's no reason that all candidates can't have access to the airwaves. Federal guidelines could, for example, require cable companies to provide one channel during certain hours to carry taped messages produced by candidates.

3. Any candidate accepting federal matching funds should be required to refrain from participating in any forum that does not include all serious candidates. How do you measure which candidates are "serious"? It's not that hard. Simply determine which candidates are conducting nationwide campaigns—those that have qualified for the ballot in 15 or more states.

4. Federal law should establish consistent rules nationwide to determine how a candidate gains access to a state's presidential primary ballot. The law should include a fee covering the state's cost of listing the candidate on the ballot. The voters will take care of the rest.

5. Finally, the Democratic Party—if it is to be a truly democratic party—must adopt strictly enforced guidelines that limit the party's role to aiding all candidates in their campaigns. No playing favorites, no arbitrary exclusion. The way I figure it, the Democratic Party either fosters free speech and open debate or it forfeits any claim to the title "party of the people," ready to govern the nation again. □

**Larry Agran** served for 12 years on the City Council of Irvine, Calif., including six years as mayor. The Agran '92 campaign can be reached at (800) 727-9425. Donations to Agran '92 can be sent to P.O. Box 159, Irvine, CA 92650. Agran '92 Issues Director **Stephen C. Smith** contributed to this article.

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# EDITORIAL

## IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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## House will investigate the October Surprise

Last week the House finally voted to conduct a full-scale hearing into the "October Surprise"—the allegation that the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign committee made an agreement with the Iranian government to prevent 52 American hostages being held in Teheran from being released before that year's presidential election. The benefit for the Reagan campaign was the defeat of Jimmy Carter's bid for re-election. The quid pro quo for the Iranians was badly-needed arms for their war with Iraq. In fact, of course, Carter was defeated and the Iranians received massive arms shipments from Israel, authorized by the Reagan administration.

In 1987, *In These Times* was the first national news outlet to publish an in-depth story outlining the basic elements of this alleged conspiracy by the Reagan-Bush committee. Over the next four years we published several follow-up pieces as new evidence came to the surface. But our efforts, along with those of others, were ignored by the commercial media and by members of Congress until last year, when former national security council member Gary Sick published an op-ed article in the *New York Times*.

After Sick's piece appeared, Republicans and administration retainers in the media launched a campaign of damage control. Articles in *Newsweek* and *The New Republic* pronounced the idea of such dirty work to be outside the bounds of legitimate discourse and pressure mounted to sweep the whole thing back under a rug. For a while it looked as if the issue would not be seriously examined.

In the deliberations of the House bill that established a 13-member panel to investigate the issue, Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-IL) introduced an amendment to limit the investigation to six months, expenditures to \$300,000 and to include investigations of the Carter administration's efforts to free the hostages. Michel's amendment went down on a straight party vote and the bill was then passed by 217-192.

The House panel will now begin an open-ended investigation of the activities of the Reagan-Bush campaign committee. There is no time limit and no limit on expenses, which the Congressional Budget Office estimates will range from \$1.2 million to \$2.5 million.

There is, of course, no guarantee that even now there will be a full and honest investigation. Remember the Iran-contra hearings, which ended up being a simple whitewash? But several House members appear determined to discover the truth, and a lot of new information is likely to come out during the course of the hearings. In any case, the House action alone is a rare victory for democracy.

## Who shot the pope? New evidence surfaces

Writing in the February 7 issue of the *National Catholic Reporter*, Peter Hebblethwaite offers new evidence on the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul in 1981. Among other things, Hebblethwaite's piece confirms testimony by CIA analyst Melvin Goodman at last year's confirmation hearings for Robert Gates as director of the CIA. Goodman said that in order to conform with then-CIA Director William Casey's hawkish notions, Gates "doctored assessments of the assassination attempt on the pope in May 1981 in order to suggest KGB involvement."

At the time, the theory that the assassination was a Soviet plot was publicized by administration flacks such as Claire Sterling, who claimed in her 1983 book *The Time of the Assassins* that Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who shot the pope, had been trained by the Bulgarian secret service. She alleged that Agca had acted on behalf of Yuri Andropov, then head of the KGB and later first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party.

Hebblethwaite writes that the new evidence surfaced in November, after the Senate had confirmed Gates. In a speech by Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti to help launch Luca di Sciana's new book, *Karol Wojtyla*, Andreotti pointed out that there had been a "gross error" in the Agca trial. Agca had testified that the final arrangements

for the assassination had been made with the Rome head of Bulgaria's airline, Sergei Antonov, at Antonov's apartment. But when Agca gave the court a sketch of the apartment, the judge ignored the fact that he had not drawn Antonov's flat but that of the floor below. There, according to Hebblethwaite, "lived a foreigner whose papers can be found in the archives of the secret service of a non-Eastern country."

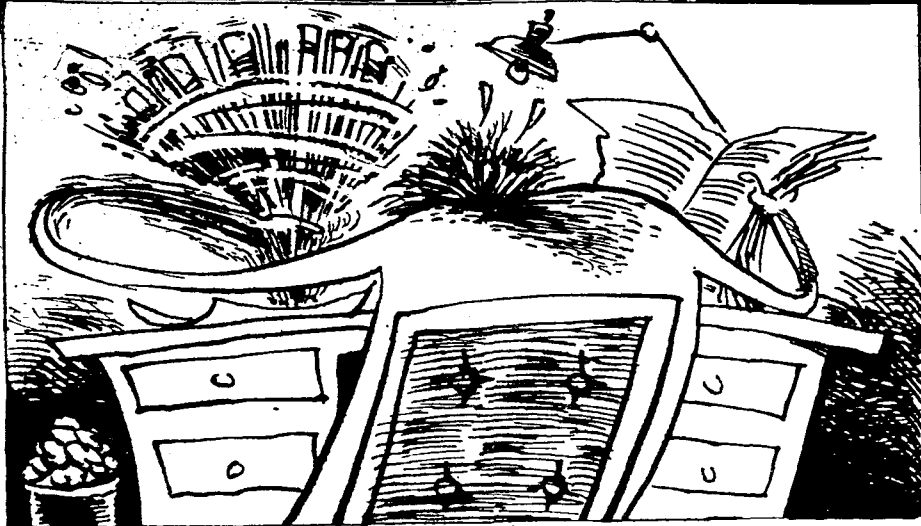
Andreotti has not yet disclosed the name of this mysterious stranger, but Hebblethwaite reports that his name is Father Felix Morlion, a Belgian Dominican well-known as a CIA agent. Morlion is a man with a record. In 1962, he had played a role in resolving the Cuban missile crisis. And in 1969, Monsignor Carlos De Angelis gave a suitcase full of documents to Mino Pecorelli, an investigative journalist murdered in 1979. They showed that Morlion's Pro Deo Institute was a school for anti-Soviet spies.

There are other reasons for mistrusting Agca's account of his meeting with Antonov. Agca claimed Antonov's wife was present and that his 10-year-old daughter, Ani, served them tea. But Ani had left Rome to go to school in Sofia three months before, and Antonov's wife had left Rome two days earlier than the meeting date.

Hebblethwaite points out that Andreotti is on excellent terms with the Vatican, with which, one may be sure, Andreotti shared this information. Hebblethwaite concludes that there was no Bulgarian connection. "Antonov was 'framed,'" he writes, and Agca "was 'coached' by some other intelligence agency."

In 1983, in an article about Claire Sterling and her book, our own Diana Johnstone drew the same conclusion, though without the confirming evidence provided by Hebblethwaite.





## Lie piled on lie

JOEL BLEIFUSS IS ENTITLED TO OFFER HIS BIZARRE viewpoint on the *JFK* film (ITT, Jan. 15). He does not, however, have the moral right to do so by the publication of lies. I will point to a few such lies published by Bleifuss.

He seeks to discredit Fletcher Prouty, "Mr. X" in Oliver Stone's film *JFK*, who was there portrayed by Donald Sutherland, and to demean Victor Marchetti, a former CIA officer. Of them, Bleifuss, quoting "a researcher" (unnamed, since he "requested anonymity"), writes that they "represent a dissident, far-right branch of the CIA." Prouty and Marchetti had both offered evidence of CIA involvement in the assassination and thus had apparently won the enmity of the secret informant and Bleifuss. The facts are relevant. Prouty has never been in the CIA. Marchetti resigned from the CIA and, together with John Marks, a fellow of Harvard's Institute of Politics and a leader of the left-of-center Center for National Security Studies, published a book, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, which was an important attack, from the left, upon the "totalitarian" nature of the CIA.

Bleifuss' shrouded "source" then was quoted as calling Prouty "a Nazi crackpot" and asserted that the film *JFK* was "a propaganda platform for Nazis," ostensibly because it presented Prouty's views. Those who saw the film may remember the Sutherland monologue in which he spoke out eloquently, as Prouty, against the continuation of the war in Vietnam, against the exploitation of the people of Central America, against the overthrow by the CIA and the military-industrial complex of Arbenz in Guatemala and Mossadegh in Iran, the rigging of elections in Europe after World War II by the CIA, and the use by U.S. intelligence forces of "the Nazi intelligence apparatus." Prouty, through Sutherland, called for the end of attacks upon Castro's Cuba. Prouty, through Sutherland, observed that Kennedy had been assassinated because he "set out to withdraw from Vietnam," citing a National Security Advisory memorandum he had authorized. Indeed, it was Col. Prouty, in real life, who helped to draft the memorandum and the Trip Report upon which it was largely based.

For the fictionalized version of the event, see *JFK*. For lies about it, read *In These Times*. For the facts, read *Plausible Denial*, which I wrote and to which Prouty contributed the introduction.

I do not believe that a single statement authored by Prouty in the film differs from an analysis of the same historic event published over the years by *In These Times*.

A question occurs. How can Bleifuss, the "In Person" editor of *In These Times*, write that the film is a propaganda platform for Nazis for presenting Prouty's views when those views are similar to, or identical with, those previously espoused by *In These Times*? A more serious question is also apparent. How dare Bleifuss, writing for an audience of critical, thinking people, rely for his false witness upon a "source," a "researcher," who must remain "anonymous" at his own request? Was Sen. Joe McCarthy ever more blatant? I think not, and I, fresh out of law school in 1951, crossed swords with him on more than one occasion as I represented some of his victims.

McCarthy also published falsehoods and

also relied upon secret informants, but he, at least, was decked out in full wolf regalia and never claimed to be a sheep.

In discussing my book, *Plausible Denial*, during an interview with a Pacifica radio station, KPFA, I had defended Prouty and former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison from several false attacks that had been made upon them in an article published by *Esquire*. For having done so, Bleifuss turned his practiced eye and poisoned pen upon me.

First, he asserts that Mark Lane has written a book about the assassination that "puts the blame squarely on the CIA." News flash: *Time* magazine and CNN have published a poll revealing that three-quarters of American people believe there was a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy, and half of them believe that the CIA was involved. Actually, *Plausible Denial* is in large measure the story of a trial in the U.S. District Court in which I represented Liberty Lobby, Inc., the publishers of *Spotlight*, a newspaper that had printed an article written by Marchetti indicating CIA complicity in the assassination. We won the case, and the forewoman of the jury stated that the evidence adduced at the trial constrained the conclusion that the CIA had indeed killed President Kennedy. These facts have appeared in newspaper reviews of *Plausible Denial* published throughout the country. Word has apparently not yet reached Bleifuss. It was the jury and the evidence upon which they relied that "puts the blame squarely on the CIA."

Bleifuss asserts, regarding the broadcast, that "Lane, however, failed to identify himself as a Liberty Lobby lawyer" and that I failed to identify myself "as the lawyer for the Institute for Historical Review, the California-based organization that posits the Holocaust as a Jewish hoax." All serious charges; all blatant lies.

Of course, I was the lawyer in the trial of *Hunt vs. Liberty Lobby*. I said so repeatedly throughout *Plausible Denial*. I said so in the KPFA interview on several occasions and I have said so on hundreds of national and local radio and TV programs. Bleifuss, I fear, is a liar. He could not have been unaware that he was deliberately making a false statement when he said I had failed to identify myself as the attorney for the defendant in a case that I had tried, won and which I had discussed so often, so publicly.

The assertion that I am the lawyer for the Institute for Historical Review (IHR) is also a false assertion. Various lawyers have over the years represented that organization in various lawsuits. They have been lawyers admitted to practice in California. I have never served as counsel for the IHR.

To have done so is not a dishonorable thing. The ACLU represents David Duke, and honorable and distinguished members of the bar have often represented individuals and organizations that hold to unpopular views and views not shared by their counsel. It is just a fact, however, that I have never represented the IHR.

Likewise, the statement that the IHR "posits the Holocaust as a Jewish hoax" is false. Is there not presently sufficient anti-Semitism in the U.S.? Must Bleifuss invent anti-Semitism even where it does not exist? During September 1991, the allegation as to whether or not the IHR has ever stated that the Holocaust did not exist was subject to litigation. The case was tried in the County of Los Angeles, Superior Court of California, before Judge Stephen M. Lachs, who is Jewish, as am I. Judge Lachs stated that he had read the voluminous record, comprised in part of all the relevant publications of the IHR, and that the IHR had never stated that the Holocaust had not occurred. He ordered counsel for the plaintiff in that case never to state to the jury that the IHR had ever contended that the Holocaust had not occurred. He ordered counsel for the plaintiff not to make such a false statement to the jury. On Oct. 30, 1991, Judge Lachs entered an order dismissing the case against the IHR.

Mark Lane  
Washington, D.C.

**Joel Bleifuss replies:** Will the real Mark Lane please stand up? One of the few honest statements that Lane makes in the above letter is that he is Jewish. In fact, Lane hauls out his religious heritage anytime anyone brings up his ongoing association with the leading lights of America's anti-Semitic far right.

Lane is not so quick to bring up the fact that he was a co-editor of *Zionist Watch*, a publication founded in September 1987 by Liberty Lobby, the largest and most influential anti-Semitic organization in the country. *Zionist Watch* (now called *New American View*) was originally edited by Mark Lane and Victor Marchetti. Lois Patterson, the Liberty Lobby's Board of Policy secretary, once described *Zionist Watch* as a newsletter designed to focus "exclusively on the massive power of Zionism in America and the world ... [and] examine the extent of control by this alien foreign international political force and how it works to undermine our Constitution and its traditions of liberty and national sovereignty."

Lane faults me for quoting an anonymous researcher who described Fletcher Prouty as a "Nazi crackpot." That source, whom I

greatly respect, requested anonymity for good reasons. I would ask readers to take my word on that. And I would ask Lane: Do you really think Prouty is "a straight-laced, patriotic, middle-of-the-road American," as you stated Dec. 20, 1991, during an interview on Pacifica station KPFA?

Prouty sits on the Liberty Lobby's Populist Action Committee. He is now marketing his book, *Secret Team*, through Noontide Press, the publishing arm of Liberty Lobby that also sells the seminal anti-Semitic work, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Finally, the Liberty Lobby paper *Spotlight* (circulation 200,000) reports that Prouty was prepared to go to court, in the Institute for Historical Review (IHR) case Lane mentions above, and testify as a character witness for Willis A. Carto, the founder of Liberty Lobby and IHR.

It was Carto who once wrote: "Hitler's defeat was the defeat of Europe. And of America. How could we have been so blind? The blame, it seems, must be laid at the door of the international Jews. It was their propaganda, lies and demands which blinded the West to what Germany was doing. ... If Satan himself, with all of his superhuman genius and diabolical ingenuity at his command, had tried to create a permanent disintegration and force for the destruction of the nations, he could have done no better than to invent the Jews."

In his new book *Plausible Denial*—No. 5 on the *New York Times* best-seller list (the non-fiction one)—Lane describes his bourbon-sipping buddy Carto as a man who "challenges the power structure, the right of financial institutions, unelected by the people, to rule the nation, whatever their religions or political affiliation may be."

With such praise, Lane might have also made a good character witness for Carto during the above-mentioned court case—if he hadn't been working as the Liberty Lobby's attorney. As Lane points out, he cannot practice in California, and therefore he was not the attorney of record in that state for Carto, the Liberty Lobby or the IHR. But in a deposition for the case taken in New York, "Mark Lane, Esq." is listed as "attorney for the defendant—Liberty Lobby, Inc."

The case in question—California Superior Court Case No. C62 92 24—involved a suit by a survivor of Auschwitz, Mel Mermelstein, against Carto and two organizations Carto founded—Liberty Lobby and IHR. Mermelstein had previously gone to court and successfully forced IHR to pay him the \$50,000 reward it had offered to anyone who could prove that the Holocaust happened. In the course of that trial, Carto said in a deposition: "Certainly there were no Jews gassed at Auschwitz, because there were no gas chambers. There were no Jews gassed at any of the camps in Germany."

Lane maintains in his letter that "the IHR has never stated that the Holocaust had not occurred." Mark Weber, the associate editor of IHR's *Journal of Historical Review*, explained the IHR position on the Holocaust to Paul Rauber of the *East Bay Express*: "If by the 'Holocaust' you mean the political persecution of Jews, some scattered killings, if you mean a cruel thing that happened, no one denies that. But if one says that the 'Holocaust' means the systematic extermination of 6 million to 8 million Jews in concentration camps, that's what we think there is not evidence for."



By James Petras

**C**OMMERCIAL BANK OFFICIALS, U.S. POLITICAL leaders, along with an army of International Monetary Fund and World Bank advisers, have been forever preaching "free-market" doctrines to Latin Americans, Africans and, now, Eastern Europeans. Their enemies are clearly named and the prescriptions are forcefully enunciated: protectionism, state intervention in the market, import quotas, state-to-state arrangements dictating prices and suppliers. Anything smacking of a managed economy, whether political intervention into economic exchanges, fixing terms of trade prices or quotas, is seen as interfering with the market, the ultimate arbiter of efficiency and the only guide to economic growth. The prescriptions put in place with the usual arm-twisting (threatened loan cutoffs, conditional loans, market closures, military coups and intervention in electoral processes, etc.) include dismantling trade barriers, termination of state subsidies to industry and agriculture, opening of domestic markets and elimination of import quotas. Leaders in Latin America yesterday and the Eastern Europeans today docilely follow the free-market rules laid down by their American mentors. As a result, local industries in these regions have been bought out by foreign capital—they were told national ownership was unimportant. Imports have driven local industries bankrupt, but they have been told that will make future enterprises more competitive. In other words, where the American industry possesses a competitive advantage over its Latin American and Eastern European trading partners, the administration proclaimed the universal beneficence of free trade.

**The other side of the coin:** Another story emerges in U.S.-Japanese trade. Here Japan has a trade surplus of more than \$40 billion, finances more than one-third of the U.S. public debt through the purchase of treasury notes and controls over a third of the U.S. auto market and major shares of electronics sales along with a multibillion-dollar foreign investment advantage. U.S. corporations, unable to sell their inferior autos to the Japanese market, rely on the

## U.S. preaches free market abroad, practices protectionism at home

U.S. government to force the Japanese to purchase American products by setting specific goals and market share for each nation's industries. Japan, under political pressure, agreed to double their purchases of auto parts from the U.S.—from \$10 billion to \$19 billion by 1994.

Rather than recognizing internal American weaknesses, the Bush administration

**"Throughout the trip, the American executives have complained that the Japanese have treated them like sidewalk beggars." In other words, the U.S. execs in Japan felt the same way that Latin officials feel when they come here—like second-class trading partners.**

attempted to blame Japanese trade policies. Yet American cars cannot compete with Japanese cars even in the U.S., where Japanese companies control 30 percent of the market. And Japanese auto producers cannot increase their U.S. market shares because they are under a U.S. negotiated quota system that allocated 70 percent of the market to U.S.-based companies. Japan responded by establishing "transplants," subsidiaries in the U.S., and increased its market share. Japan's offer to purchase \$10 billion in U.S. parts will be supplied in large part (80 percent) by Japanese suppliers in the U.S. Even the corporate executives who accompanied Bush to Japan were aware of the way political intervention shaped the

whole trade negotiation.

"Throughout the trip, the American executives have complained that the Japanese have tended to treat them like sidewalk beggars, doling out commitments to buy American goods out of some sense of public duty and political self-interest rather than any conviction that Japan needs to buy what America is selling" (*New York Times*, Jan. 10). In other words, the U.S. executives in Japan felt the same way that Latin officials feel when they come to the U.S.—as second-class trading partners.

Washington was quite willing to use its political power to compensate for its economic weakness, to negotiate market shares on the basis of political criteria. The notion of managed trade, state-to-state arrangements, is profoundly at variance with any notion of free trade.

**Switching feet:** Could one imagine the Brazilian government demanding that the U.S. purchase a percentage of its auto parts to balance its trade deficit; could one conceive of the Argentine government telling the IMF that it would allow no more than 30 percent of its market to overseas auto exporters? Can the Latin American governments negotiate with the U.S. to accept targets and quotas on their preferred exports—even if the U.S. produces better products, cheaper? Would the U.S. respond to pressures from Latin America to wring concessions from local industry to allow higher cost, less efficient industries a market share? Obviously not.

Clearly, when the U.S. is in an inferior trading position, as it is with Japan, protectionism, state intervention, managed trade and import quotas are the name of the game. Free trade is a flexible doctrine applicable only when favorable terms of trade exist. Otherwise, the U.S. is one of the most protectionist countries in the world—one in which the state intervenes against the exports of powerful developed countries such as Japan and among less-developed countries of the Third World who are more efficient in specific product lines.

In agriculture, the U.S. allocates huge subsidies for its wheat exports, thus violating the free-market doctrines in its competition

with Australian producers. The U.S. applies countervailing duties on wool, ham, cotton, sugar, rice and dozens of other import commodities to protect local producers. The U.S. has imposed quotas: restricting Jamaica to selling 970 gallons of ice cream a year, Mexico to 35,292 bras and Haiti to 7,730 tons of sugar. And in the middle of July 1991, Washington imposed new textile quotas on Nigeria, Costa Rica, Burma, Panama, Pakistan, etc., while coercing Korea and Hong Kong to cut their textile exports.

State protectionism, state subsidies, state-induced quotas, state-enforced constraints on trading partners—in a word, the economic trade and development policies of the U.S.—violate every free-market precept that they preach to the Latin Americans. In many areas where the U.S. has a competitive disadvantage in the market, the state intervenes to protect inefficient industries and to avoid adding to the mushrooming unemployment rate.

The great fear is political: that the U.S. market will be taken over by overseas exporters and investors, thus compromising U.S. sovereignty and capacity to decide national economic policy. When the U.S. government decides which goods are imported and their prices, they violate the whole notion of consumer sovereignty—the choices are dictated by the sovereign state.

The U.S. faces a sharp decline in the dynamic Asian markets, not just Japan: Malaysian imports from Asia increased from 51 percent in 1986 to 55 percent in 1989; imports from the U.S. fell from 19 percent to 17 percent. In the Philippines, imports from East Asia rose from 42 to 46 percent, while imports from the U.S. fell from 24 percent to 19 percent. To compensate for its declining position in Asia, the U.S. hopes to gain special access in Latin America via the free-trade treaties. However, the free-market policies, while benefiting the U.S. in the short run, have created a stagnant trade and investment region that cannot compare with the dynamic expansion in Asia.

When and if the Latin American governments recognize the positive lessons of state intervention, protection and subsidies that all dynamic industrial countries practice but do not preach, they will recognize that free trade, too, has its value, in the proper time and place.

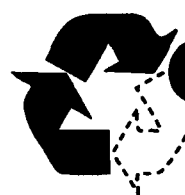
James Petras teaches sociology at the State University of New York, Binghamton.

"This country needs a democratic left. The collapse of communism and the demise of the cold war should be occasions for renewal. . . .

"There is a democratic dream to be renewed. It is the practical dream of libertarians like Thomas Paine and feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, of socialists and trade unionists like Eugene V. Debs and A. Philip Randolph, of civil rights champions like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. . . ."

### DEMOCRATIC VISTAS 1991: A STATEMENT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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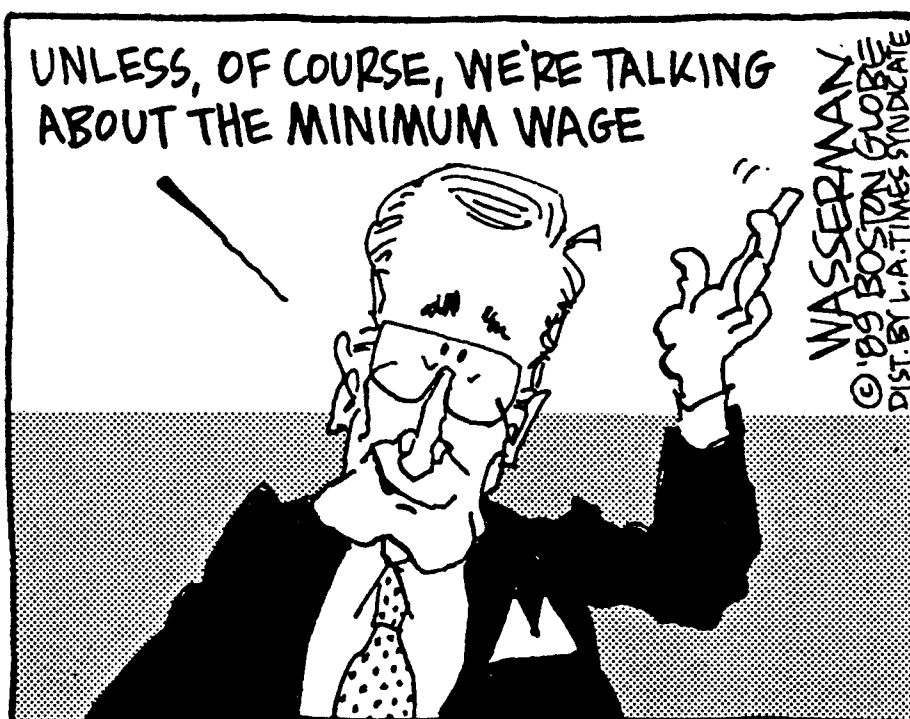
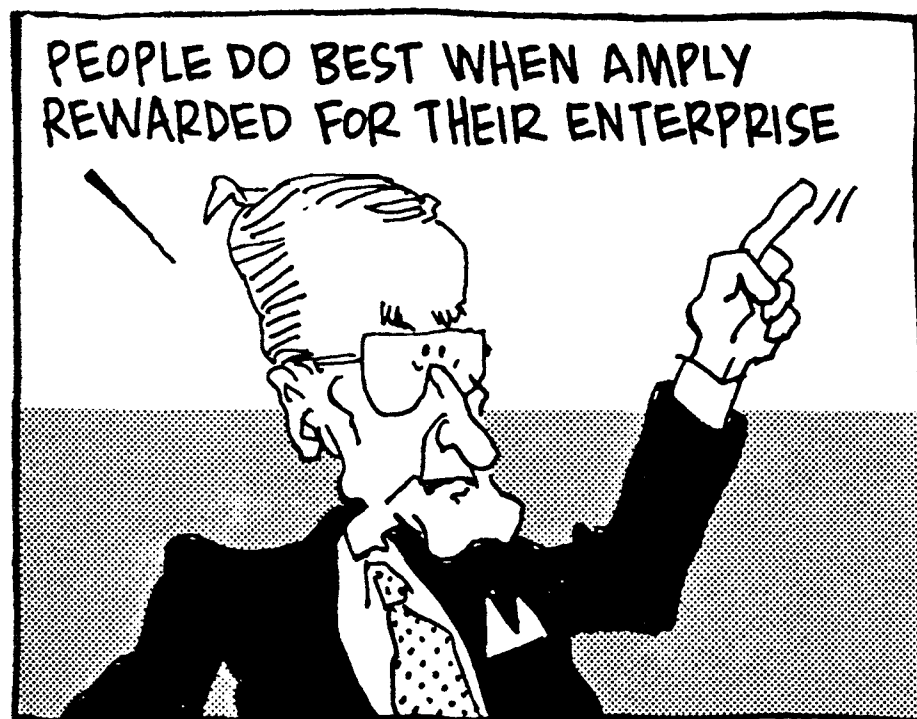
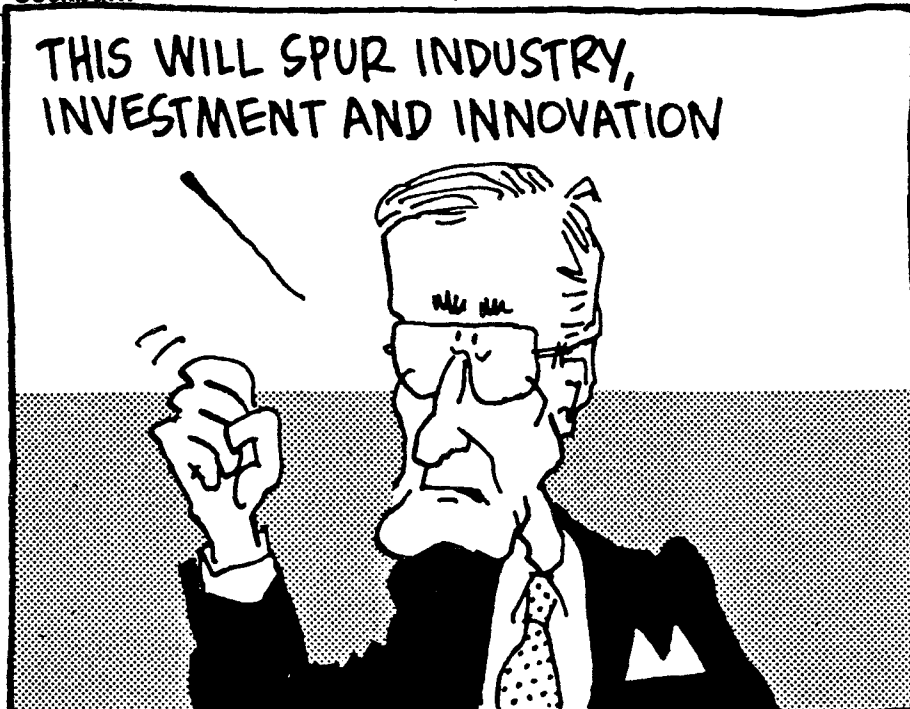
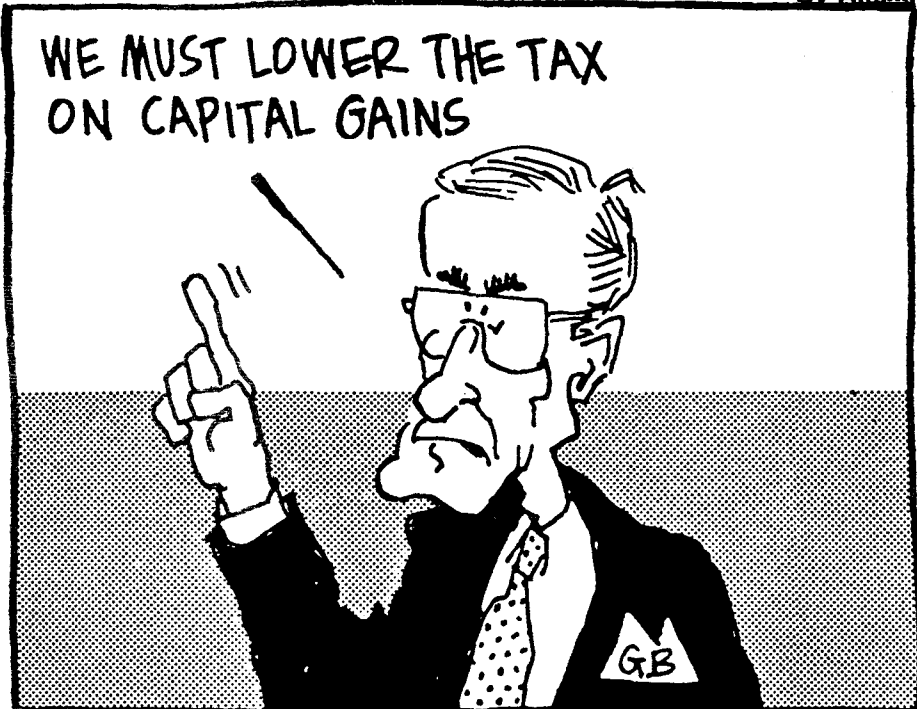
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# ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



## George Bush's Republican manifesto

The Republican strategy in this election year has now been unveiled: class war. As expounded by President Bush in his State of the Union address two weeks ago, the agenda could not be more shameless. The rich get a big tax break, the rest get nothing. If the country was populated entirely by people with incomes of more than \$100,000 a year, the campaign would be over.

Set against the economic realities of 1992, there is something awe inspiring about the purblind inequity of the president's proposals. Amid the economic rubble of the Reagan-Bush years three features stand out: the speculative mania that has almost destroyed the financial system; the speculative building boom that has led to record vacancy rates in commercial real estate and imperiled the banks and insurance companies financing such activity; the regulatory surrender that permitted such rampages.

The same three features constitute the drive train of Bush's economic agenda. Bush's proposed cuts in the capital gains tax rates would reward all the vices of the roaring '80s. To a nation still stricken with the consequences of the last building boom,

he promises new breaks for real-estate speculators. And he announces a new war on regulation.

The centerpiece of the Bush program is the president's drive to lower the tax rates on capital gains. In his State of the Union address Bush had the effrontery to claim that this would be a big boom for the little guy, that any benefit to the rich would come almost as an unintended side effect.

This is pure nonsense as even Bush's Treasury officials admit. A cut in the capital gains tax benefits those with capital. Fewer than 10 percent of those with incomes of less than \$50,000 have any capital gains, as opposed to more than half of those with incomes of over \$200,000.

Of course, Bush and his associates do not care to have it put so baldly that the simple purpose of their proposed capital gains tax cut is to give the rich another break. They like to argue that the scheme has a loftier purpose, that the surge in business activity consequent upon such a cut will lead to the sort of growth associated with a huge drop in interest rates.

Let us consider in this light an extraordinary exchange that took place in Congress almost exactly two years ago. The exchange, between Michael Boskin, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Sen. Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, makes it clear that the White House has known all

along that all lofty claims for the capital gains cut had no basis in fact, that the cut would merely be doing the rich a favor and that was that.

Sarbanes, a Democratic senator, asks Boskin, the president's main economic adviser, if indeed, as the White House claims, the proposed cut is designed to lower interest rates (what economists call "the cost of capital"). Here's the exchange as it took place on January 24, 1990 in the Joint Economic Committee:

Sarbanes: "...The main point of the capital gains tax cut is to reduce the cost of capital. Is that correct? Do you subscribe to that point of view?"

Boskin: "Yes. We have talked about it many times, yes."

Sarbanes: "How much would interest rates have to fall to give the same reduction to the cost of capital as a 30-percent capital gains exclusion?"

Boskin: "A small amount."

Sarbanes: "Am I correct that it would have to fall only .05 of 1 percent?"

Boskin: "I was about to say probably 10 basis points, or something like that, 15."

A basis point is .01 of 1 percent. Jeff Faux, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute, who exhumes this amazing confession in the January/February issue of *Challenge*, points out that even with Boskin's optimistic assumptions

the administration's tax cut proposal at that time would have had an effect on investment equivalent to a drop in interest rates from 7 percent to 6.85 percent.

In his latest version Bush now wants to drop the rate as much as 50 percent, which would be the equivalent — on Boskin's computation — of an interest drop of .5 percent. To put this in perspective, the drop in the prime rate offered by commercial banks between October 1990 and October 1991 amounted to almost 250 basis points (7.81 percent to 5.34 percent, a fall far larger than anything claimed by the White House with the capital gains cut), and it still was not enough to crank up investment and turn the recession around.

So when Bush told Congress the other night that a cut in the capital gains tax "increases jobs and helps just about everybody in our country" he was talking drivel, and his own chief economic adviser told him as much more than two years ago.

So much for the Bush program: more speculation, more wealth transferred to the rich, and somewhere soon down the road a tax-payer bail-out of the FDIC. At least the agenda has a certain clarity. The rich are to get richer and the rest get deregulation, meaning a dirtier environment, a more dangerous workplace and in the end, as taxpayers, the privilege of paying for the pig-out at the top of the pyramid. ■



By Bill Bigelow

**S**HORTLY AFTER THE CHRISTOPHER Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission formed several years ago, its first chairman, John Goudie, urged Americans to join the "uncontroversial and universally appealing" 500th anniversary celebration.

Well, John, life doesn't always turn out as we plan, does it? Today, Goudie is no longer commission chairman, having resigned in disgrace amid accusations of cronyism and corruption. More significantly, the Columbus myth itself is beginning to crumble. But a new myth of "encounter" and "exchange" is rising to take its place.

The old myth was an explicit tribute to imperialism. Christopher Columbus — determined, brave, skillful, reverent—leads a mission of discovery and conquest to the uncharted West. While en route to the Indies, he makes a much more important find: America. He claims the land for Spain and Christianity, brings a few natives back to show off and plans future trips to the "New World."

**Silenced majority:** In storybooks and texts, children are led to cheer these acts of imperial arrogance and aggression. The native American people have no consciousness, no feelings, no voice. When acknowledged, "Indian" resistance to the Spaniards is labeled as "unfriendly" acts by "ferocious Caribs." The whole adventure of "discovery" is cause for unquestioned celebration.

Books such as Hans Koning's *Columbus: His Enterprise*, Kirkpatrick Sale's *Conquest of Paradise* and the organized critical response of indigenous groups throughout the Americas have put Columbus boosters on the defensive. The cheerleaders are still around, of course, but they've taken a back seat to the new "academic" Columbus mythmakers. OK, they promise, we won't say Columbus "discovered" America anymore. We'll say he "encountered" it; and, yes, Columbus did take slaves; and, yes, he did mistreat the Indians and many of them died; and, all right, the whole enterprise led to the African slave trade, which was a bad thing. But...

The elaboration of this "but" dominates today's mainstream response. Suddenly it's everywhere: The Smithsonian's "Seeds of Change" exhibit and book, *Newsweek's* "When Worlds Collide" special fall/winter Columbus issue, Berkeley's Lawrence Hall of Science 1492-1992 exhibit, the National Council for the Social Studies' guidelines for teaching about the quincentenary, official and editorial pronouncements—they all play off the same themes.

The ideological terrain is shifting, and we need to be aware lest we continue to attack a largely defeated myth. The new Columbus line, sum-

## New Indian trade rout myth

med up nicely in *Newsweek's* special issue, warns us not to look for "heroes and villains," but to "look at the vast changes that were wrought." This "Columbian Exchange" is even-handed. "They" gave "us" the potato, corn and a great deal of gold. "We" gave "them" the horse, sugar and—regrettably—germs. The new discourse centers on "exchanges" of technology, food, disease, people and even wealth—and how these exchanges revolutionized the world.

**Drawing the line:** A fear of politics underpins the new mythmaking. It's permissible to mention African slavery as a consequence of 1492, but not permissible to suggest that social inequalities in today's world have anything to do with events 500 years ago. It's all right to hint that today's degradation of the Earth is connected to the legacy of 1492, but only so long as "we" are all held equally responsible.

It's fine to point out that the chocolate milkshake is a by-product of the Columbian exchange, but not the imperial premises of the International Monetary Fund. It is acceptable, however, to speak of "biological imperialism," an expression that's become quite fashionable. Death and destruction? Blame it on the germs.

The Columbus of the new myth is "complex"—religious but cruel, a

skillful sailor but an inept administrator. Critics are chided for evaluating Columbus with "contemporary glasses" rather than seeing him as a complicated man of his time. The

### COLUMBUS

new myth, like the old myth, ignores or is contemptuous of other "men of their time" such as Antonio de Montesinos, Pedro de Cordoba or Bartolomé de las Casas, priests who denounced the inhumanity of the Spanish conquest. Also silenced are the Taino Indians, "men—and women—of their time," who resisted the early European invasion with determination and subtlety. This suppression of the voices of protest and defiance in the revised myth teaches people to ignore today's movements for justice.

**A fear of politics underpins the new mythmaking. It is fashionable to speak of "biological imperialism." Hey, blame it on the germs.**

Implied in the new myth and stated explicitly in the *Newsweek* piece is that the "encounter" and its aftermath was inevitable. Why get so upset if, like an earthquake or tornado, the mass extermination of Indians, the African slave trade and all the inequities that followed were bound to happen? If, as the mythmakers hope, the argument succeeds in stifling condemnations of the past, then they can go back to talking about changes in the world's diet and 15th-century navigation techniques.

It's a trap we should avoid, for if we fail to analyze and criticize 500-year-old Spanish imperialism because it was "inevitable," then we disable ourselves from recognizing and denouncing these same tendencies in our own society—we run the risk of seeing these as inevitable as well. Which may, in fact, be a major subtext of the revised Columbus myth: Criticizing a long-ago social system built on controlling other people's land and resources, accompanied at home by vast inequalities of wealth and power, could spawn a similar critique of contemporary U.S. society.

**Unseen underhanded:** There is a nasty teleology lurking beneath the historical inevitability claim: the implication that our society as it is currently structured was meant to be.

It's a page out of the Manifest Destiny credo: This society is what history has led up to; indeed, it is what history was for. The U.S.—militarily supreme, decision-maker for the world—was the intended conclusion of an unseen hand of fate.

The old Columbus myth held that discovery was primarily motivated by curiosity, wanting to prove the world was round, and a desire to spread Christianity. The new myth acknowledges that a quest for profit was more central but links this profit motive with qualities that allegedly make our society great—as *Newsweek* puts it, "a fascination with new ideas, a knack for scientific discovery, an ability to adapt and change." The revised Columbus tale implies that an economic system based on greed is vital for any social improvement.


The new mythmakers have discovered native American cultures. I first noticed this tendency in a long article, "America Before Columbus," in the July 8, 1991 *U.S. News and World Report*—pages and pages on ancient Indian civilizations. This approach offers some political advantages to the Columbian exchange people. Native demands for recognition can be undercut: "We are acknowledging the rich contributions of the first Americans," they can claim.

This ersatz multiculturalism also popularizes grizzly descriptions of aspects of cultures such as the Aztec and Maya, which then can "balance" the atrocities of Columbus, Cortes, Pizarro, et al. At dinner the other evening, a friend said, "I can't feel bad about what happened. The Indians would have done the same thing if they'd had the chance." He'd been reading about Aztec human sacrifices.

But the new mythmaking is more than some cynical capitalist plot. Cynical they may be, but the recent apologetics and scholarship derive from a world view that understands this as the only, if not the best, society possible. Like the conquistadors of old, these folks believe in what they're doing.

And, I suppose, we should be thankful for the more sophisticated arguments. The "Columbus was good/Columbus was bad" debate was awfully limited. A narrow focus on Columbus, proving that he took slaves and massacred untold numbers of Tainos is no longer enough for us—if it ever was. The Columbian exchange crowd may have done the left a favor. If the measured, dispassionate "balance" of the new mythmakers still hides a reactionary agenda, then it's up to us to offer an alternative.

Bill Bigelow is co-editor of *Rethinking Columbus* and wrote the afterword for teachers in the new edition of Hans Koning's *Columbus: His Enterprise*. *Rethinking Columbus* is available for \$6 from Rethinking Schools, 1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212.



By His EXCELLENCY  
**WILLIAM SHIRLEY, Esq;**  
Captain-General and Governor in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New-England,  
and Vice-Admiral of the same, and Major-General in His Majesty's Army.

### A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS the Indians of Norridgewock, Arrisagun a'wah, Weweenock and St. John's Tribes, and the Indians of the other Tribes inhabiting in the Eastern and Northern Parts of His Majesty's Territories of New-England, the Penobscot Tribe only excepted, have, contrary to their solemn Submission unto His Majesty long since made, and frequently renewed, been guilty of the most perfidious, barbarous and inhuman Murders of divers of His Majesty's English Subjects; and have obtained from all Commerce and Correspondence with His Majesty's English Subjects for many Months past; and the said Indians have fully discovered an inimical, traitorous and rebellious Intention and Disposition;

I have therefore thought fit to issue this Proclamation, and to Declare the Indians of the Norridgewock, Arrisagun a'wah, Weweenock and St. John's Tribes, and the Indians of the other Tribes of New-England, and late inhabiting in the Eastern and Northern Parts of His Majesty's Territories of New-England, and late in Alliance and Confederacy with the above-mentioned Tribes, the Penobscots only excepted, to be Enemies, Rebels and Traitors to His Most Sacred Majesty: And I do hereby require His Majesty's Subjects of this Province to embrace all Opportunities of pursuing, capturing, killing and destroying all and any of the aforesaid Indians, the Penobscots excepted.

AND WHEREAS the General Court of this Province have voted, That a Bounty or Encouragement be granted and allowed to be paid out of the Publick Treasury to the marching Army that shall be employed for the Defence of the Eastern and Western Frontiers from the Twenty-fifth of this Month of June until the Twenty-fifth of November next;

I have thought fit to publish the same; and I do hereby promise, That there shall be paid out of the Province Treasury to all and any of the said Forces, over and above their Bounty upon Enrollment, their Wages and Subistence, the Premiums or Bounties following, viz.

- For every Male Indian Prisoner above the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be taken and brought to Boston, Fifty Pounds.
- For every Male Indian Scalp, brought in as Evidence of their being killed, Forty Pounds.
- For every Female Indian Prisoner, taken and brought in as aforesaid, and for every Male Indian Prisoner under the Age of Twelve Years, taken and brought in as aforesaid, Twenty-five Pounds.
- For every Scalp of such Female Indian or Male Indian under Twelve Years of Age, brought as Evidence of their being killed, as aforesaid, Twenty Pounds.

GIVEN under my Hand at Boston, in the Province aforesaid, this Twelfth Day of June, 1755, and in the Twenty-eighth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord GEORGE the Second, by the Grace of GOD, of Great-Britain, France, and Ireland, KING, Defender of the Faith, &c.

By His Excellency's Command,  
J. WILLARD, Sec'y.

**GOD Save the KING.**

By the Honourable His Majesty's Council. 1755.

BOSTON: Printed by John Draper, Printer to His





benefits from a network of "various traditions"—religious and secular, black and white, African-American and European—and that seeks to unite race, class and gender. In this way, hooks and West not only are "breaking bread" together as they engage in their lively dialogues, but they are also breaking boundaries

## EDUCATION

and moving against and beyond the categories that define (and simplify) people, disciplines and types of intellectual labor.

*Breaking Bread* made me eager to hear more from hooks and West. As I finished reading, I wished especially that they had spoken in greater detail about their activity as college teachers. Somewhat surprisingly, they say little about their actual jobs and their notion of what they are aiming to achieve in the classroom. Hooks refers at one point to "liberatory pedagogy," but neither she nor West fleshes out this term. How do they interact with students? What innovations have they brought to their teaching? Can they tell of exemplary changes in consciousness they have seen among students and the process by which these conversions and transformations came about? In sum, what's it like to believe what hooks and West believe and yet to teach day to day at such wealthy, renowned institutions? Can they really practice there the tenets they fervently preach?

In part, I raise these questions because as an academic myself I am curious and want to learn about "liberating" styles of teaching. But I also raise them because almost everybody today is interested in building bridges between the workplace and the community, and connecting the fragmented pieces of their lives. This is an issue hooks and West engage in *Breaking Bread*, but I think they can say a good deal more about it, offering us fuller testimony, description, guidance. Their stimulating book beckons for a sequel.

William E. Cain teaches at Wellesley College.

## Black intellectuals talk the talk, walk the walk

### Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life

By bell hooks and Cornel West  
South End Press, 175 pp., \$12.00

By William E. Cain

**T**HIS SENSITIVE, INSIGHTFUL AND often moving book consists of interviews and dialogues between bell hooks and Cornel West, and separate essays by each of them on black intellectual life. The commentaries hooks and West offer on the conditions facing black Americans are grim and disturbing in many respects, and West in particular speaks severely about the failures of entrenched black leadership and "the old line civil rights organizations."

Yet hooks and West emphasize that, while this is "the worst of times in Black America," it is also "the best of times"—a moment of renewal and revitalization in the black church, and in music, literature, film, popular culture. By celebrating and partaking of this spirit of new discovery, progressive inquiry and "joy in struggle," *Breaking Bread* takes its stand as a powerfully affirmative and optimistic book. It shows the possibilities for growth and development that lie in respectful, serious, sustained collaboration between black men and women, and it bears witness to exciting prospects ahead for black radicals and intellectuals.

West teaches at Princeton and hooks at Oberlin, but both are committed to resisting the academic and professional conventions that threaten to enclose them—and cut them off from the black community as a whole. The very form of *Breaking Bread*—a sequence of animated, open, exploratory conversations—marks their effort to combat the jargon and specialization that many academics favor: They insist on conducting intellectual debate in a manner that non-academics can appreciate and share.

**A rich diversity:** No doubt, a sizable number of hooks' and West's professional colleagues will be suspicious of this book and will judge it as unscholarly and hence as marginal and unserious. But this response, I think, simply reveals the dismaying limitations of current academic work, and it serves as a backhanded tribute to the courageous originality hooks and West display.

The range of topics and figures that hooks and West consider is richly diverse. Their book contains keen analyses of major voices in the black intellectual, political and religious traditions, from Marcus Garvey to James Baldwin, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. It also includes sharp observations about Spike Lee, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison and other important contributors to contemporary black American literature and culture. And, perhaps most important of all, *Breaking Bread* pro-

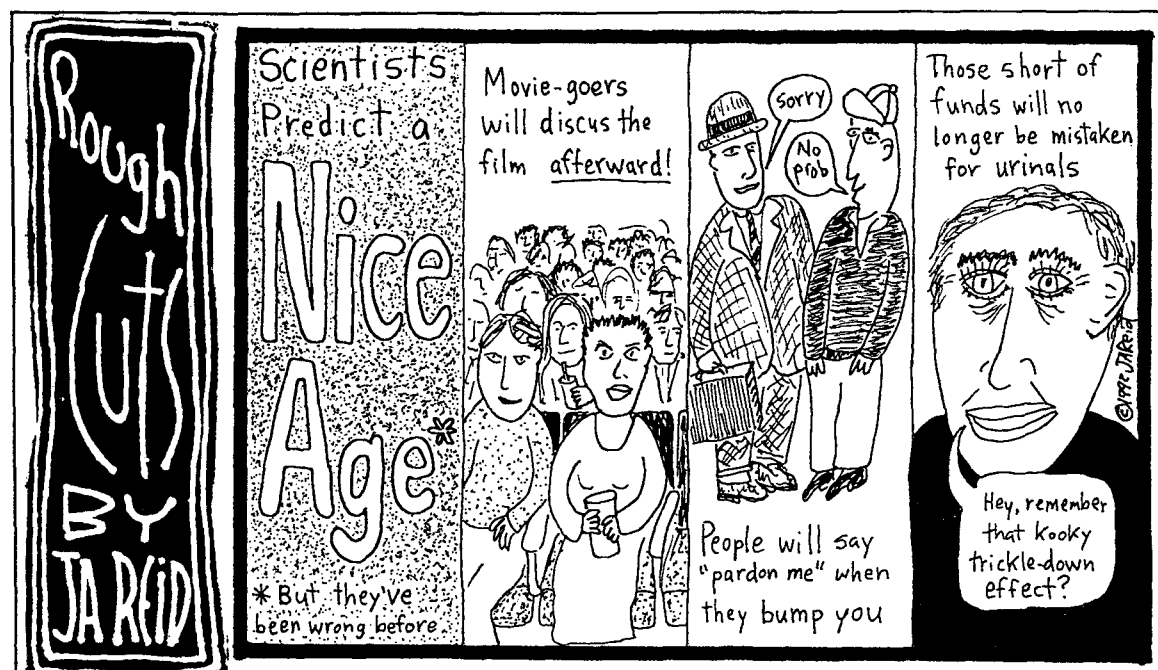
vides eloquent, sometimes painful reflections on the nature of black male/female relationships and "gender politics"—an area in which hooks herself has done much valuable

**In its spirit of new discovery and progressive inquiry, *Breaking Bread* takes a stand as a powerfully optimistic book.**

work, in many essays and in a series of books that began with *Ain't I a Woman?* (1981) and *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984).

The central lessons conveyed in *Breaking Bread* are that black people must be adamantly proud of their race, cherishing and fighting for one another, even as they must also recognize the crucial role that gender and class play in determining who they are—and how much or how little they can become. *Breaking Bread* is, West states, a book that has "principally Black points of reference."

**Break bread and boundaries:** Yet, hooks adds, it is also a book that resourcefully draws upon and





## Media and the Environment

Edited by Craig L. LeMay and  
Everette E. Dennis  
Island Press, 220 pp., \$17.95

By Will Nixon

**P**OST-INDUSTRIAL NORWALK, Conn., is not a perfumed suburban town graced with the scent of cut lawns and lilac trees. But, still, I was surprised one day on my way to lunch by how bad the smell had gotten. "Fish," I thought, walking toward the Norwalk River bridge. "What's that fishy stench?"

And there, under the bridge, a tall concrete culvert sandwiching a sad collection of greasy brown rocks and a small brook, lay the fish, hundreds and hundreds of silver bunkers. The bunkers are considered a trash fish to the local fishermen who cast into the river downstream hoping for harbor blues, and there they were, piled up the embankments and laying on the flats as densely as if this was a fish store.

A fish holocaust, I thought, shocked at how much life had hidden in the murky water of this river. Some fish had wedged themselves almost to the tail between the embankment rocks, as if they had died trying to escape the deadly water. Slowly, one by one, they were nudged loose from a rock to float under the bridge and out to sea.

**Industrial park:** For a week, I couldn't get my mind off this wide-open graveyard. On the way to work I would stop at the oil-tank "farm" on the riverbank a quarter-mile downstream from the bridge. Here, the water widens to mud flats at low tide, birds gather, including egrets that appear from the tall row of brown marsh grass on the far side. You can see that, even amidst the industry and ugliness, the natural world can still thrive.

I'd seen crabs and schools of minnows so thick that when they jumped they tore the placid water surface like a fat handful of thrown pebbles. No more. The dead bunkers lay rotting everywhere. And the birds had grown into a monstrous horde of seagulls jammed across the sky like a scene from Hitchcock's antidote to National Geographic specials, *The Birds*. "What a story," the reporter in me kept thinking. "What a story."

But the truth was: What story? *The Norwalk Hour*, a very local paper, ran a photo from under the bridge as a curiosity item, quoting fishermen who said the harbor blues must have chased the bunkers upstream until they ran out of oxygen in the narrow creek. That didn't even sound like a good guess. I'd seen the blues make the bunkers jump like flipping pancakes, but an aquatic Auschwitz?

My colleague, Elissa Wolfson, finally tracked down the story for the alternative weekly, *The Fairfield County Advocate*: The river oxygen had, indeed, fallen to dangerously

# What's fishy about today's environmental reporting?

low levels, a condition known as hypoxemia, thanks to heavy rains that flooded the local sewage drains which poured nitrogen into the harbor. The fish had drowned, an ironic comment on man's ability to skew the environment.

*Media and the Environment*, edited by Craig L. LeMay and Everette E. Dennis, may not save the fish, but it offers some cogent thoughts on the state of the environmental beat. "As a topic for media attention, the environment has probably never fared better," write LeMay and Dennis in their preface. And who could disagree? In 1988, *Time* ran its "Planet of the Year" issue. Two years later, the *Seattle Times* took a Pulitzer for its coverage of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and the tiny *Washington Daily News* in rural North Carolina won another for discovering that the local politicians had known for eight years that their water supply was spiced with carcinogens. The U.S. Marines had to come to the rescue with water wagons.

**A new course:** ABC *Nightly News*, CNN and the *Los Angeles Times* seem to be the leaders of the pack among the book's contributors. But *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Jim Detjen, head of the two-year-old Society for Environmental Journalists, writes, "Fifteen years ago, few environmental reporters had taken a single course in ecology. Today, many have advanced courses in biology, chemistry, law and investigative reporting."

Lately, the recession, the primaries, and Bill Clinton's pants have dominated the headlines, but the June Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which may draw 30,000 people, could cause a media stampede akin to Earth Day 1990, at least if President Bush decides to go.

More is better, undoubtedly, but by how much? That's the question vexing most of the contributors in *Media and the Environment*. "As historian Christopher Lasch has argued in the *Gannett Center Journal*, what people need is not simply more information but usable information that allows them to engage one another as citizens," writes Teya Ryan, a producer for *Network Earth* on the TBS superstation. "Unless it is responsibly done and extremely well done, the dueling-perspectives approach, I believe, creates apathy and does not empower people. And empowering people is, in part, what covering the environment is all about." She and others point to global warming as a story muffed by the media's penchant for playing ping-pong with opposing views.

"More than 700 members of the National Academy of Sciences recently wrote President Bush urging action on global climate change,"

says Sen. Albert Gore (D-TN), once a reporter for the *Nashville Tennessean*. "Six or seven members take the other side of the argument, but they are given equal billing with the 700."

**The usual garbage:** Environmental journalism suffers from some

Robert Gottlieb, author of *War on Waste: Can America Win Its Battle with Garbage?*, adds that the media

## REPORTING

has granted "semiofficial status" to the national environmental groups



© Lionel Delvingre

of the same sins as all mainstream media. Sharon Friedman, who teaches at Lehigh University, writes: "Media Monitor points out that in 1989, for environmental coverage on television evening newscasts and in weekly newsmagazines, government officials accounted for 32 percent of the sources used—twice the percentage of the next most frequently used group of sources."

as the voice of environmentalism to the neglect of grassroots activity. Hence, the media spent the '70s energy crisis mulling over high-tech fixes such as nuclear fusion and synthetic fuels, largely missing the neighborhood anti-nuke campaigns that had a more lasting impact. In the '80s, the anti-toxics movement got short shrift. And Gottlieb argues that the media still treats environ-

mentalism as a "lifestyle" issue rather than as one of social justice.

Jim Detjen doesn't quite agree. "Community activists protesting the siting of hazardous waste incinerators or nuclear dumps get a lot of coverage because the activists are vocal and have media savvy. But much less coverage is given to long-term environmental stories such as the decline in migratory songbirds in the U.S., the erosion of topsoil and the increasing haziness that blankets large areas of the nation during the summer months."

Flipping through these essays, one finds all kinds of ways the natural world doesn't fit the conventions of the traditional newsbeat. And yet, many of the contributors still seem impaled on the issue of advocacy vs. impartiality, no doubt a debate that has entertained the industry—and probably few others—for years.

Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*, cuts to the real issue in his foreword. "We stand at an interesting moment in history, when the chief conflict in the world may soon involve people and nature.... To cover this story accurately will involve, I think, enlarging our conception of our jobs. Topics long left to theologians, to nature writers, to philosophers must also become the province of women and men with reporter's notebooks and minicams."

Someday soon, I hope, the bunker fish won't have to hold a press conference for their catastrophe to make the news.

Will Nixon is an editor at *E* magazine.

## NOTEBOOK

### Capitalism

By Campbell McGrath  
Wesleyan/University Press of  
New England, 58 pp., \$10.95

Campbell McGrath's book *Capitalism* was published a year ago, but I have yet to see any reviews for it in even the smallest literary magazines. I don't know of anyone else who has read it, and I have only found copies of it in one bookstore. I can't account for this general negligence, but I can vouch for the book's excellence. While way too many books of poetry published today sound remarkably interchangeable and innocuous, McGrath's first book introduces a young poet with a unique and unhesitating voice, fully developed technical skills and a vivid and intelligent sense of history and its consequences and intrigues equalled among living American poets only by C.K. Williams.

Again and again, McGrath's writing calls to mind Whitman and Woody Guthrie, and, to a slightly lesser degree, Allen Ginsberg. He writes with a bardic expansiveness, and he's a cataloger's cataloger. His tone is distinctly populist. Yet his tempo and temperament are his own, or at least

his generation's—a generation weaned on Watergate and Vietnam. These events were the givens of American life for him, rather than the exceptions they might have appeared to be to others of previous generations, and there are subsequent feelings of pessimism and distrust that invade even the most rowdy, outrageous adventures.

McGrath's songs, then, are of a state in decay, but they are not self-righteous or preachy. Instead, he and his friends are the manifestation of this phenomenon. Handed the American dream, or what's become of it, and either unwilling or unable to accept it, they keep trying to discover the real America—at Graceland, on television, through brand-name consumerism and at nearly every point on the map—but they frequently end up drunk or drugged out, more than once hitting golf balls into the ocean—a perfect metaphor for the dissolution of a country once driven westward by manifest destiny.

What makes these stories and images so effective and keeps them from sheer self-indulgence of the Bret Easton Ellis school are McGrath's historical explorations and his control of traditional

poetic techniques and forms. Included in the book are two sonnets about the lives of the early settlers in New England, a lengthy poem based on the journals of Meriwether Lewis and a short history of industrial theory drawn in an unlikely but convincing line from Ulysses Grant's military strategies through the marketing tactics of Henry Ford and the poetry of William Carlos Williams. These historical poems show the glory and grandeur of the pioneers' visions as well as the seeds of excess and destruction that were sown by them at the same time.

Throughout the book (and one of its strengths is that it is a book of poems rather than just a collection), McGrath walks a tightwire between seeming contradictions, establishing both his unique voice and the complexity of his vision. His formal control just barely reins in his headlong adventures. His sense of history is balanced by how totally his language and experiences are those of his own generation. While none of his topics or attitudes are new, the combination is unique, and the deftness with which they are melded together is impressive.

—Dallas Crow



## Grand Canyon

Directed by Lawrence Kasdan

By Pat Aufderheide

IN PRESTON STURGES' 1941 *SULLIVAN'S Travels*, a pompous, overprivileged Hollywood director decides to start making movies about poverty and misery and plunges out into the stuff to get some data. He discovers that the poor love

## FILM

the movies' ability to charm them away for a few moments from the irredeemable pathos of their lives, and he comes back a convert to fluff. The movie is vastly amusing.

*Grand Canyon*, Lawrence Kasdan's most recent film, refers approvingly to *Sullivan's Travels*. This is very dangerous because *Grand Canyon* is not amusing at all. In fact, it is the worst of Hollywood—wide-screen earnestness, the baring of a threadbare soul. It's like the misbegotten privileged director of *Sullivan's Travels* before he got entertainment-industry religion.

In *Grand Canyon*, writer-director Larry Kasdan (who, as writer, created Indiana Jones as well as writing and directing the self-congratulatory/self-flagellating *The Big Chill*) discovers the cavernous and widening gaps between classes in America. Kasdan's alter ego, the immigration lawyer Mack (Kevin Kline) and his touchy-feely wife (Mary McDonnell)—people with a 15-year-old, a palatial home-cum-botanical garden and contacts in the film industry—discover that, as the wife puts it, "the world doesn't make sense to me anymore."

**Lucky disasters:** This is brought home to them when Mack's car stalls on a ghetto street and he is saved from thugs only by the timely arrival of tow-truck driver Simon (Danny Glover); by the near-fatal shooting in a robbery of his producer friend (Steve Martin); and by the wife's discovery of an abandoned child near their home. The theme is knocked home for the viewer by peering into Simon's life, where his sister and her children are living in ghetto hell. There's an offscreen deaf child, too, making it possible to introduce the disability without having to pay an actor; if you don't know that Kasdan's wife Meg's charity issue is deafness, you could guess.

Actually, Kasdan discovers that outside Beverly Hills—and sometimes even in its alleyways—life is considerably less tony. If *Grand Canyon* does not become a touchstone film for middle-class America it will not be because it's bathetic and prententious—think of *Terms of Endearment* or even *The Big Chill* itself, both hankie-time hits—but because most moviegoers think that people do live in palatial homes in upscale Los Angeles neighborhoods and



*Grand Canyon*: A spectacle of post-'80s aesthetic heartburn.

## Kasdan's bland canyon and other unnatural disasters

lunch with movie producers are, well, rich.

For rich people, even for professionals who might be considered handmaidens to the rich, to discover that social chaos lurks below smacks of the naive. Furthermore, for them only to discover class at the bottom-most rungs—gang-ridden neighborhoods, the homeless, the abandoned and desperate—rather than the pinched middle class (which every aspiring presidential candidate has discovered in the last month) smacks of the intolerably dumb.

As Jean Renoir understood so well when he made *Boudu Saved from Drowning*, this cross-class discovery business can become the stuff of savage comedy, if you make the culture of the concerned bourgeois himself the subject. In *Grand Canyon*, which is absolutely and purely free of all irony or, indeed, wit, Sam's nagging self-actualization desire—something that seems to cry out for a New Age scheme to come along and massage it—instead becomes the motor of the movie.

**Warning signs:** In the event that the good-hearted moviegoer were to extend empathy anyway, that viewer might then be jolted anew into irritation by one or more of the following:

- Home truths, often in implausi-

**In *Grand Canyon*, writer-director Lawrence Kasdan discovers the cavernous and widening gaps between classes.**

bly folksy pontifications, are delivered by the tow-truck driver, who might as well have "Salt of the Earth" written on his forehead. (Poor Danny Glover.)

- Mack often maunders on about meaning in his life, with a patent self-infatuation that, however coddled in real life if the speaker is one's boss, should be rejected in art.

- The plot is moved along like a rusty piece of machinery by a series of crises that begin to stretch even the most indulgent suspension of disbelief. ("Earthquake!")

- Once again, the wife is intuitive, plant-feeding, contemplative and in touch with her own higher irrationality.

- The script is polluted with unrelenting foul language, in an extremely limited vocabulary, apparently demonstrating that there is, after all, a cultural bond between classes.

- In the final scene, the *Grand Canyon* is photographed to look like a poor reproduction in a third-rate encyclopedia. (If, indeed, this is because of the real-life smog problem, too bad it didn't become part of the story.)

From this spectacle of post-'80s aesthetic heartburn, we can say that Lawrence Kasdan has once again demonstrated, as he did in *The Big Chill*, his gift for describing, though not diagnosing, a crisis of bad faith. For a filmic portrayal of the phenomenon Kasdan claims to address, you might try John Sayles' *City of Hope*, an insightful, moving story about life across class and culture in urban middle America today. Maybe there's a trend developing. *The Big Chill* was a sentimentalization and class upgrade of another John Sayles movie, *The Return of the Secaucus Seven*.

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## Saturday morning munch?

The 1990 Children's Television Act mandated higher-quality programming for children, but the fast-food manufacturers must have heard wrong. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported, they're designing shows starring existing characters from their own advertising—Frito-Lay's Chester Cheetah (for Cheetos), Ronald McDonald and now, possibly, Kraft's Cheesaurus Rex are among the new kids' TV stars. Building a program around an existing commercial character or toy used to be banned, but the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) changed its mind in the Reagan era, and instantly shows such as *GI Joe*, *Strawberry Shortcake* and *My Little Pony* swept into kids' viewing. The impressive sales resulting have kept them and their permutations and successors, such as *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, going ever since. The 1990 law had required the FCC to define and limit product-related programming, but its definitions have taken the teeth out of the mandate. Action for Children's Television (ACT) and other children's advocates are planning to file a protest with the FCC.

But that may be one of the last gestures of ACT, Peggy Charren's 23-year-old organization, which announced in January that 1992 would be its last working year. Charren claimed a victory in the passage of the 1990 Act, but there's plenty of work left to do. As Jeffrey Chester of a successor organization, Washington, D.C.-based Center for Media Education, acknowledged. The center's Campaign for Kids' TV, which Charren helped establish, will organize local coalitions in several cities nationwide. The coalitions will pressure broadcasters and policymakers to produce higher-quality kids' programming.

## Buy a ballot issue

Can you buy an election? That's not always the way it used to be. For instance, when real-estate interests put an anti-rent-control proposition on the California ballot in 1980, deluging media with paid advertising, citizen organizers countered with a request for free airtime to respond. They got it and defeated the proposition. Broadcasters gave them time because the Fairness Doctrine, requiring radio and TV stations to air controversial issues fairly, applied specifically to ballot issues.

When the FCC suspended the Fairness Doctrine in 1987, ballot issues remained protected, and in 1988, on issues ranging from bottle bills to crime, citizen organizers used the clause to gain valuable airtime. But in early January, the FCC eliminated enforcement on ballot issues. No Fairness Doctrine, argued the FCC, no ballot-issue enforcement. The move was precipitated by a lawsuit conducted by longtime public-interest law firm Media Access Project. It will be contested by a set of public-interest organizations including the Citizens Communications Center of Georgetown Law School. Advocates may find Congress in their corner, since many legislators are furious at the FCC for its handling of the Fairness Doctrine issue.

## Campaigning or advising?

Broadcasters remain wary of politicians where money isn't involved. TV stations are raising eyebrows at a public service announcement (PSA) starring President George Bush. The majority of stations that have received the PSA from the Small Business Administration—in which Bush gives a plug for small business and urges entrepreneurs to contact the agency—have refused to run it during the presidential campaign. NBC and CNN, among the refusers, say Bush's appearance turns it into electioneering. But the agency says that at least 28 percent of the stations to which it was sent are using it. Watch your dial.

## Get 'em young

In their never-ending search for captive audiences, advertisers have discovered maternity wards. New moms in some 60 hospitals across the nation will be receiving The Newborn Channel on their TV sets, and the service aims at 1,000 hospitals by 1994. The case for midwives and home births gains another argument.

"Place-based media," as it's known, has become a big-ticket item for advertisers looking to target their viewers. The Chec-Out Channel at supermarkets, Airport Video Network and Chris Whittle's Channel One programming for schools are thriving examples of advertiser ingenuity. In fact, reports *Electronic Media* magazine, Whittle's operation (now half-owned by megaconglomerate Time-Warner) expects its earnings from place-based TV alone in 1991 to be more than the entire cable industry earned in advertising 10 years ago.

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# GATT

Continued from page 7

exportable films to compensate for the jobs lost in just one U.S. industry, textile and apparel. A study prepared for a domestic textile-industry group predicts that almost 1 million jobs would be lost over 10 years in this sector if the new GATT is adopted.

Does our loss mean the creation of millions of lower-paying textile jobs in developing nations? Certainly foreign jobs will be created if people in the U.S. can afford new clothes after the dust from GATT settles. But GATT also means that nations with guaranteed markets in the U.S. under the existing quotas will be pushed out by other exporters. So, for example, already underpaid Caribbean and Central American workers may lose out to even more lowly-paid Chinese workers. The race to the wage bottom and search for unregulated working conditions in this industry will only be exacerbated by GATT.

"Without any protection for workers' rights and social and environmental standards in other nations, the replacement by GATT of the current system of import quotas will result in massive job loss for U.S. textile and apparel workers," says Ron Blackwell, an economist with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. "This, in turn, will further erode the living and working standards for some of the most vulnerable U.S. workers."

And these displaced workers are not likely to find the few jobs created by GATT in the film, pharmaceutical or financial-service industries. How many extras can Hollywood use?

**Fast track to hell:** Ironically, the new

GATT would implement legislation that the Reagan and Bush administrations have been unable to push through Congress in the last 11 years. According to the farm coalition's Kathy Ozer, "Corporate interests are now winning in Europe what two successive administrations could not deliver from Congress."

Similarly, the assault on environmental and health and safety laws under the new GATT countermands years of congressional precedents. But Congress forfeited its right to amend GATT last May when it voted to grant the president "fast-track" negotiating authority for the agreement. The president garnered that vote by promising that GATT would not undermine U.S. environmental and consumer law and that he would not sell out U.S. farmers.

A broad coalition of U.S. consumer and environmental groups, convinced that the president betrayed that promise, is now asking Congress to rescind its fast-track vote. Alarmed by the new GATT's implications, this coalition—partially comprised of groups that otherwise support liberalized trade relations—recently sent a letter to Congress urging lawmakers to reject the agreement as it stands. The letter complains that GATT "prevents nations from acting as global health and environmental leaders, eliminates the voices of those who must bear the environmental and health burdens of expanded economic activity and provides no mechanism for popular sovereignty over the outcomes of the international decision-making process."

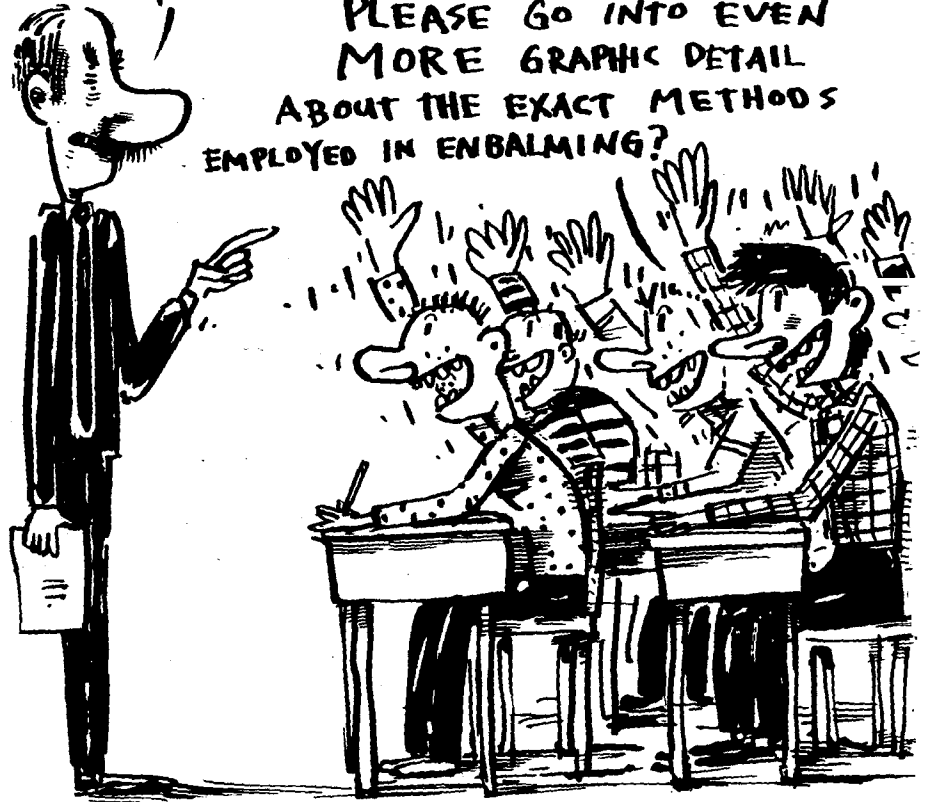
**Don Wiener**, an organizer and lobbyist, works for the Fair Trade Campaign, a coalition of farm, labor and environmental groups.

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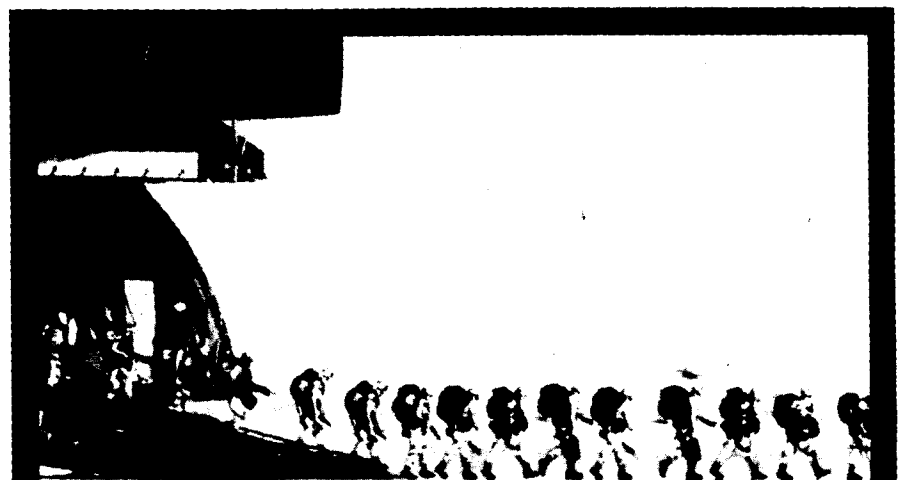
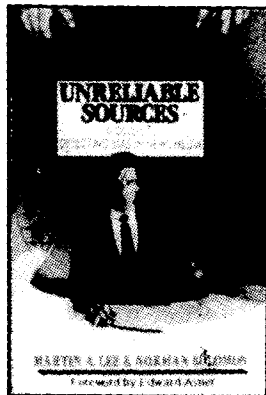
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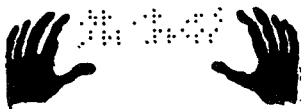
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## Conservatives keep singing their something-for-nothing refrain.

**T**HE "FAILURE" OF NEW DEAL, Great Society and other "give-away" programs proved conservatives were right: You can't get something for nothing. A grateful nation submitted to this wisdom and handed over the government to conservatives. Republican and Democrat, who have run the nation for about 20 years now on the conservative platform: "You *can* get something for nothing."

This apparent contradiction, especially when it manifests itself in various financial scandals, is sometimes mistaken as "socialism for the rich." But the philosophical assumptions guiding conservative thought are far, far broader than any narrow class or even personal interest. Of course, conservatives enjoy feeding at the Pentagon trough, getting "bailed out" of their mismanaged businesses, sailing through tax loopholes and the like. And naturally, "too big to fail" applies not only to behemoth financial institutions but to any individual with enough assets, a clean enough criminal record (anything short of marijuana use *after* college) and at least some "access" to the corridors of power. Far more intriguing is the "you can get something for nothing" nature of conservative doctrine when applied to America's vast social dilemmas.

**Choice cuts:** Consider virtually any of the myriad catastrophes now being visited upon the American middle and underclass. Our educational system, for example, has fallen to third-rate status and poses a serious threat to the economy. The "tax-and-spend" crowd wants to raise taxes and spend the money on teachers, revamped curricula and other such nonsense. Conservatives say "choice" is the answer.

"Choice" will bring "competitive market forces" into play in the realm of education. As everyone knows by now, competitive market forces are quite magical, replete with "invisible hands" and the unfathomable but always beneficent mysteries of "incentive." Best of all, "choice" costs nothing! Zip. Nada. Simply issue parents educational "vouchers" and let them "choose" which schools their children will attend. Schools being nothing more than rather tarted-up "education factories," the magic of competition will bring all the factories up to snuff. "Choice," the magic of free-market competition, can do for American education exactly what it did for the American automobile industry!

Choice. With one notable exception, choice is wonderful. It sounds like freedom, which

Americans like. And, gol darn it, it is free! No need for the unpleasantness of "tax and spend." When you have "choice," you can get something for nothing.

What? You say you have a national health-care problem? Infant-mortality rate booming? AIDS bankrupting entire communities? No insurance? Try new, improved "tort reform" and watch that inflamed gall bladder just melt away. Yes, the problem with doctors is lawyers! At absolutely no cost to you the consumer (apart from the bloated salaries of your fiscally-conservative representatives), a little tort reform will take the litigation out of medicine, lower malpractice awards, thus lowering doctors' malpractice insurance premiums, thus lowering the amount your doctor has to charge you for yanking that gall bladder. Presto! You just got something for nothing, pal. (Or lost something for nothing. Take your pick.) America does not need national health care—America needs another cheap promise of something for nothing.

**Just say "so":** Suffering from a persistent substance-abuse problem? Perhaps you or someone you love is a crack addict or an alcoholic. Perhaps he or she is eager to receive treatment. But, gosh, no treatment programs or facilities are available. *Pay* for some?! Are you a dumb person or what? "Just say no!" Presto. "Just say no." C'mon. All together now.... Hey. C'mon.

Suffering from a persistent teenage pregnancy problem? Perhaps you or someone you love is pregnant. Perhaps she is only 12 and wants an abortion. But, gosh, no sex-education or birth-control programs were in place before, and now government-funded clinics can't even mention the "A" word. *Pay* for birth-control clinics? *Mention* the "A" word?! Are you a dumb person, etc.? Say the "C" word: No. Sorry. "Choice" is not an option in this particular context. Say "Chastity." Chastity, if we could just find any, would be very inexpensive, solving this whole disgusting sex thing for nothing!

Suffering from an onslaught of social ills from unemployment to homelessness to crime to environmental collapse to rotting economic infrastructure? Try new, improved "Thousand Points of Light." It works, it's 100 percent biodegradable, and it's free! (And, if you've ever actually *seen* a thousand points of light, the charming resemblance to Tinker Bell is irresistible.)

The ingenious thing about the conservative take on "something for nothing" is that conservatives have made it a self-enforcing

dictum by bankrupting government. By running up a \$4 trillion tab at the Big Balls/Big Bullets Bar, they've guaranteed that there won't be much in the way of Keynesian government spending to address *any* problem. In fact, now, even when *conservatives* want some extra money to fix something, they must often resort to the "something for nothing" approach.

When Ollie North & Co. wanted to fix that awful Sandinista problem in Nicaragua, for example, they were enthralled by the prototypically terrific, something for nothing "neat idea." They would sell arms to the Ayatollah of Iran, then send the money to the contras. True, it was illegal, but we got something for nothing (if you don't count the bodies). And it sorta worked!

**Spender bender:** "Something for nothing" is something to remember anytime America encounters a crying need, domestic or foreign. You can't just spend your way out of problems like poor education, inferior health care, drug abuse, abortion, unemployment, homelessness, crime, environmental collapse or rotting infrastructure. Ideologically, it would be very naughty. Fiscally (thanks to that big bar tab), it would be impossible. No, remember the "something for nothing" approach: "Choice," "Tort Reform," "Just Say No," "Chastity" ("Choice" invalid in sex category) and the cure-all "Thousand Points of Light." (I *do* believe in fairies. I *do* believe in fairies.) These and other equally potent chants such as "Capital Gains Tax Cut" or "Read My Lips" are just a PR man's brainstorm away. (OK. A "braindrizzle.") "Something for nothing" is the answer to nearly all America's ills.

We must say "nearly all" because conservatives are not ideologically tumescent *all* the time. Conservatives, whether neo, paleo, Neanderthal or Australopithecine, aren't hidebound Marxists or adamant social democrats with some carved-in-stone blueprint for solving problems. Conservatives are creative and flexible when truly pressing needs arise, such as their failed S&Ls or their aching balls and bullets. These unique problems will, however regrettably, require the somewhat distasteful but necessary infusion of federal dollars, even if we have to borrow them from Japan.

After all, you can't get something for nothing. ☐

Travis Charbeneau is a freelance writer living in Richmond, Va.

By Travis

Charbeneau